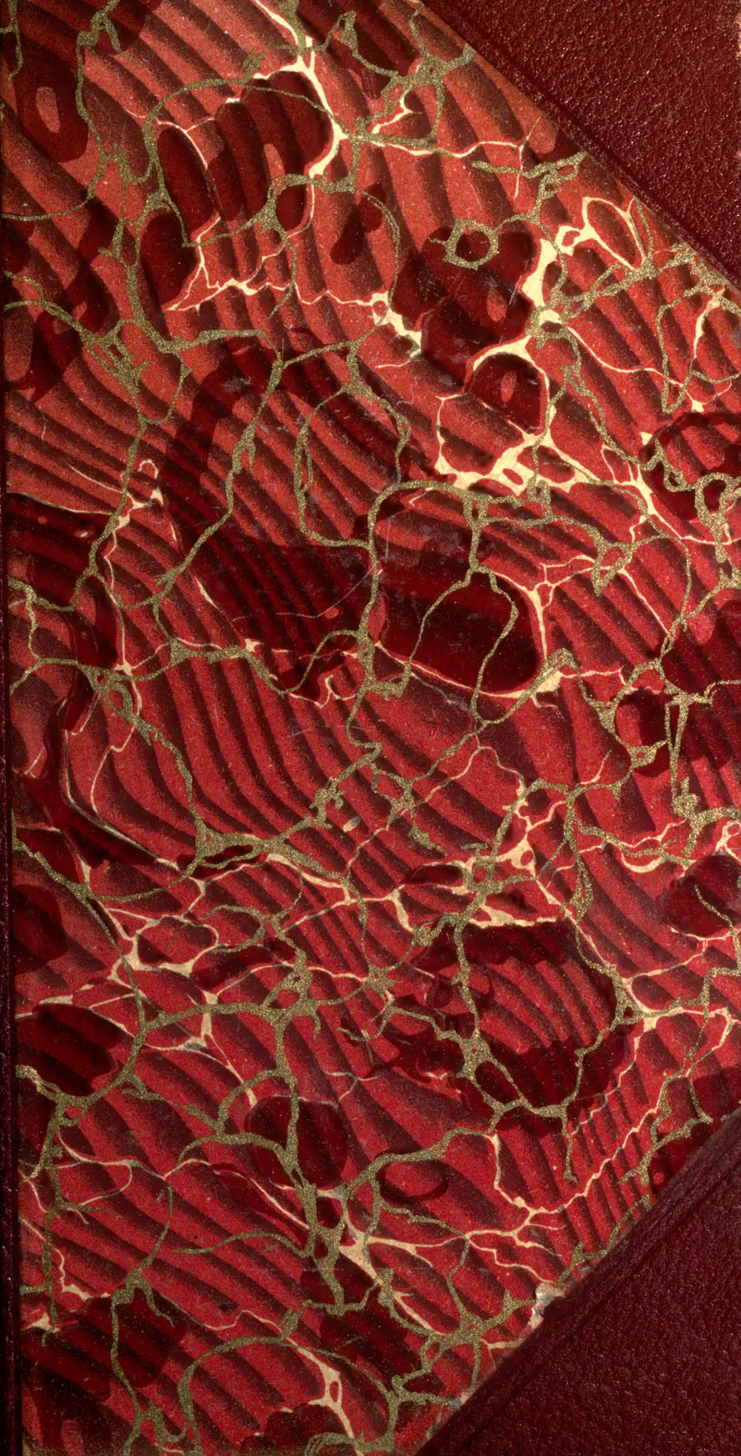

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marie antoinette

MARIE ANTOINETTE
AND HER SON

An Historical Novel

BY

L. MÜHLBACH

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LOUISA OF PRUSSIA AND HER TIMES, HENRY VIII. AND HIS COURT, ETC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY

REV. W. L. GAGE

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MARIE ANTOINETTE AND HER SON.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

A HAPPY QUEEN.

It was the 13th of August, 1785. The queen, Marie Antoinette, had at last yielded to the requests and protestations of her dear subjects. She had left her fair Versailles and loved Trianon for one day, and had gone to Paris, in order to exhibit herself and the young prince whom she had borne to the king and the country on the 25th of March, and to receive in the cathedral of Notre Dame the blessing of the clergy and the good wishes of the Parisians.

She had had an enthusiastic reception, this beautiful and much-loved queen, Marie Antoinette. She had driven into Paris in an open carriage, in company with her three children, and every one who recognized her had greeted her with a cheerful huzza, and followed her on the long road to Notre Dame, at whose door the prominent clergy awaited her, the cardinal, Prince Louis de Rohan, at their head, to introduce her to the house of the King of all kings.

Marie Antoinette was alone; only the governess of the children, the Duchess de Polignac, sat opposite her, upon the back seat of the carriage, and by her side the Norman nurse, in her charming variegated district costume, cradling in her arms Louis Charles, the young Duke of Normandy. By her side, in the front part of the carriage, sat her other two children—Therese, the princess royal, the first-born daughter, and the dauphin Louis, the presumptive heir of the much-loved King Louis the Sixteenth.

The good king had not accompanied his spouse on this journey to Paris, which she undertook in order to show to her dear, yet curious Parisians that she was completely recovered, and that her children, the children of France, were blossoming for the future like fair buds of hope and peace.

"Go, my dear Antoinette," the king had said to his queen, in his pleasant way and with his good-natured smile—"go to Paris in order to prepare a pleasure for my good people. Show them our children, and receive from them their thanks for the happiness which you have given to me and to them. I will not go with you, for I wish that you should be the sole recipient of the enthusiasm of the people and their joyful acclamations. I will not share your triumph, but I shall experience it in double measure if you enjoy it alone. Go, therefore, my beloved Antoinette, and rejoice in this happy hour."

Marie Antoinette did go, and she did rejoice in the happiness of the hour. While riding through Paris, hundreds recognized her, hundreds hailed her with loud acclamations. As she left the cathedral of Notre Dame, in order to ascend into the carriage again with her children and their governess, one would be tempted to think that the whole square in front of the church had been changed into a dark, tumultuous sea, which dashed its raging black waves into all the streets debouching on the square, and was filling all Paris with its roar, its swell, its thunder-roll. Yes, all Paris was there, in order to look upon Marie Antoinette, who, at this hour, was not the queen, but the fair woman; the happy mother who, with the pride of the mother of the Gracchi, desired no other protection and no other companionship than that of her two sons; who, her hand resting upon the shoulder of her daughter, needed no other maid of honor to appear before the people in all the splendor and all the dignity of the Queen of France and the true mother.

Yes, all Paris was there in order to greet the queen, the woman, and the mother, and out of thousands upon thousands of throats there sounded forth the loud-ringing shout, "Long live the queen! Long live Marie Antoinette! Long live the fair mother and the fair children of France!"

Marie Antoinette felt herself deeply moved by these shouts. The sight of the faces animated with joy, of the flashing eyes, and the intoxicated peals of laughter, kindled her heart, drove the blood to her cheeks, and made her countenance beam with joy, and her eyes glisten with delight. She rose from her seat, and with a gesture of inimitable grace took the youngest son from the arms of the nurse, and lifted him high in the air, in order to display this last token of her happiness and her motherly pride to the Parisians, who had not yet seen the child. The little hat, which had been placed sideways upon the high *toupet* of her powdered head, had dropped upon her neck; the broad lace cuffs had fallen back from the arms which lifted the child into the air, and allowed the whole arm to be seen without any covering above the elbow.

The eyes of the Parisians drank in this spectacle with perfect rapture, and their shouting arose every moment like a burst of fanaticism.

"How beautiful she is!" resounded everywhere from the mass. "What a wonderful arm! What a beautiful neck!"

A deep flush mantled the face of Marie Antoinette. These words of praise, which were a tribute to the beauty of the woman, awoke the *queen* from the ecstasy into which the enthusiasm of her subjects had transported her. She surrendered the child again to the arms of his nurse, and sank down quickly like a frightened dove into the cushions of the carriage, hastily drawing up at the same time the lace mantle which had fallen from her shoulders and replacing her hat upon her head.

"Tell the coachman to drive on quickly," she said to the nurse; and while the latter was communicating this order, Marie Antoinette turned to her daughter. "Now, Therese," asked she, laughing, "is it not a beautiful spectacle—our people taking so much pleasure in seeing us?"

The little princess of seven years shook her proud little head with a doubting, dark look.

"Mamma," said she, "these people look very dirty and ugly. I do not like them!"

"Be still, my child, be still," whispered the queen, hastily, for she feared lest the men who pressed the carriage so closely as almost to touch its doors, might hear the unthinking words of the little girl.

Marie Antoinette had not deceived herself. A man in a blouse, who had even laid his hand upon the carriage, and whose head almost touched the princess—a man with a blazing, determined face, and small, piercing black eyes, had heard the exclamation of the princess, and threw upon her a malignant, threatening glance.

"Madame loves us not, because we are ugly and dirty," he said; "but we should, perhaps, look pretty and elegant too, if we could put on finery to ride about in splendid carriages. But we have to work, and we have to suffer, that we may be able to pay our taxes. For if we did not do this, our king and his family would not be able to strut around in this grand style. We are dirty, because we are working for the king."

"I beg you, sir," replied the queen, softly, "to forgive my daughter; she is but a child, and does not know what she is saying. She will learn from her parents, however, to love our good, hard-working people, and to be thankful for their love, sir."

"I am no 'sir,'" replied the man, gruffly; "I am the poor cobbler Simon, nothing more."

"Then I beg you, Master Simon, to accept from my daughter, as a remembrance, this likeness of her father, and to drink to our good health," said the queen, laying at the same time a louis-d'or in the hand of her daughter, and hastily whispering to her, "Give it to him."

The princess hastened to execute the command of her mother, and laid the glistening gold-piece in the large, dirty hand which was extended to her. But when she wanted to draw back her delicate little hand, the large, bony fingers of the cobbler closed upon it and held it fast.

"What a little hand it is!" he said, with a deriding laugh; "I wonder what would become of these fingers if they had to work!"

"Mamma," cried the princess, anxiously, "order the man to let me go; he hurts me."

The cobbler laughed on, but dropped the hand of the princess.

"Ah," cried he, scornfully, "it hurts a princess only to touch the hand of a working-man. It would be a great deal better to keep entirely away from the working-people, and never to come among us."

"Drive forward quickly!" cried the queen to the coachman, with loud, commanding voice.

He urged on the horses, and the people who had hemmed in the carriage closely, and listened breathlessly to the conversation of the queen with the cobbler Simon, shrank timidly back before the prancing steeds.

The queen recovered her pleasant, merry smile, and bowed on all sides while the carriage rolled swiftly forward. The people again expressed their thanks with loud acclamations, and praised her beauty and the beauty of her children. But Marie Antoinette was no longer carried beyond herself by these words of praise, and did not rise again from her seat.

While the royal carriage was disappearing in the tumult and throng of the multitude, Simon the cobbler stood watching it with his mocking smile. He felt a hand upon his arm, and heard a voice asking the scornful question:

"Are you in love with this Austrian woman, Master Simon?"

The cobbler quickly turned round to confront the questioner. He saw, standing by his side, a little, remarkably crooked and dwarfed young man, whose unnaturally large head was set upon narrow, depressed shoulders, and whose whole appearance made such an impression upon the cobbler that the latter laughed outright.

"Not beautiful, am I?" asked the stranger, and he tried to join in the laugh of the cobbler, but the result was a mere grimace, which made his unnaturally large mouth, with its thick, colorless lips, extend from one ear to the other, displaying two fearful rows of long, greenish teeth. "Not beautiful at all, am I? Dreadfully ugly!" exclaimed the stranger, as Simon's laughter mounted higher and higher.

"You are somewhat remarkable, at least," replied the cobbler. "If I did not hear you talk French, and see you standing up straight like one of us, I should think you were the monstrous toad in the fable that I read about a short time ago."

"I am the monstrous toad of the fable," replied the stranger, laughing. "I have merely disguised myself to-day as a man in order to look at this Austrian woman with her young brood, and I take the liberty of asking you once more, Have you fallen in love with her?"

"No, indeed, I have not fallen in love with her," ejaculated the cobbler. "God is my witness—"

"And why should you call God to witness?" asked the other, quickly. "Do you suppose it is so great a misfortune not to love this Austrian?"

"No, I certainly do not believe that," answered the other, thoughtfully. "I suppose that it is, perhaps, no sin before God not to love the queen, although it may be before man, and that it is not the first time that it has been atoned for by long and dreary imprisonment. But I do love freedom, and therefore I shall take care not to tell a stranger what I think."

"You love freedom!" exclaimed the stranger. "Then give me your hand, and accept my thanks for the word, my brother."

"Your brother!" replied the cobbler, astounded. "I do not know you, and yet you call yourself, without more formal introduction, my brother."

"You have said that you love freedom, and therefore I greet you as my brother," replied the stranger. "All those who love freedom are brothers, for they confess themselves children of the same gracious and good mother who makes no difference between her children, but loves them all with equal intensity and equal devotion, and it is all the same to her whether this one of her sons is prince or count, and that one workman or citizen. For our mother, Freedom, we are all alike—we are all brethren."

"That sounds very finely," said the cobbler, shaking his head. "There is only one fault that I can find with it, it is not true. For if we were all alike, and were all brothers, why should the king ride round in his gilded chariot, while I, an old cobbler, sit on my bench and have my face covered with sweat?"

"The king is no son of Freedom!" exclaimed the stranger, with an angry gesture. "The king is a son of Tyranny, and therefore he wants to make his enemies, the sons of Freedom, to be his servants, his slaves, and to bind our arms with fetters. But shall we always bear this? Shall we not rise at last out of the dust into which we have been trodden?"

"Yes, certainly, if we can, then we will," said Simon, with his gruff laugh. "But here is the hitch, sir—we cannot do it. The king has the power to hold us in his fetters; and this fine lady, Madame Freedom, of whom you say that she is our mother, lets it come to pass, notwithstanding that her sons are bound down in servitude and abasement."

"It must be for a season yet," answered the other, with loud, rasping voice; "but the day of a rising is at hand, and shows with a laughing face how those whom she will destroy are rushing swiftly upon their own doom."

"What nonsense is that you are talking?" asked the cobbler. "Those who are going to be destroyed by Madame Liberty are working out their own ruin?"

"And yet they are doing it, Master Simon; they are digging their own graves, only they do not see it, and do not know it; for the divinity which means to destroy them has smitten them with blindness. There is this queen, this Austrian woman. Do you not see with your wise eyes how like a busy spider she is weaving her own shroud?"

"Now, that is certainly an error," said Simon; "the queen does not work at all. She lets the people work for her."

"I tell you, man, she does work, she is working at her own shroud, and I think she has got a good bit of it ready. She has nice friends, too, to help her in it, and to draw up the threads for this royal spider, and so get ready what is needed for this shroud. There, for example, is that fine Duke de Coigny. Do you know who that Duke de Coigny is?"

"No, indeed, I know nothing about it; I have nothing to do with the court, and know nothing about the court rabble."

"There you are right, they *are* a rabble," cried the other, laughing in return. "I know it, for I am so unfortunate as not to be able to say with you that I have nothing to do with the court. I have gone into palaces, and I shall come out again, but I promise you that my exit shall make more stir than my entrance. Now, I will tell you who the Duke de Coigny is. He is one of the three chief paramours of the queen, one of the great favorites of the Austrian sultana."

"Well, now, that is jolly," cried the cobbler; "you are a comical rogue, sir. So the queen has her paramours?"

"Yes. You know that the Duke de Besenval, at the time that the Austrian came as dauphiness to France, said to her: 'These hundred thousand Parisians, madame, who have come out to meet you, are all your lovers.' Now she takes this expression of Besenval in earnest, and wants to make every Parisian a lover of hers. Only wait, only wait, it will be your turn by and by. You will be able to press the hand of this beautiful Austrian tenderly to your lips."

"Well, I will let you know in advance, then," said Simon, savagely, "that I will press it in such right good earnest, that it shall always bear the marks of it. You were speaking just now of the three chief paramours—what are the names of the other two?"

"The second is your fine Lord de Adhémar; a fool, a rattle-head, a booby; but he is handsome, and a jolly lover. Our queen likes handsome men, and everybody knows that she is one of the laughing kind, a merry fly, particularly since the carousals on the palace terrace."

"Carousals! What was that?"

"Why, you poor innocent child, that is the name they give to those nightly promenades that our handsome queen took a year ago in the moonlight on the terrace at Versailles. Oh, that was a merry time! The iron fences of the park were not closed, and the dear people had a right to enter, and could walk near the queen in the moonlight, and hear the fine music which was concealed behind the hedges. You just ask the good-looking officer of the lancers, who sat one evening on a bench between two handsome women, dressed in white, and joked and laughed with them. He can tell you how Marie Antoinette can laugh, and what fine nonsense her majesty could afford to indulge in." *

"I wish I knew him, and he would tell me about it," cried cobbler Simon, striking his fists together. "I always like to hear something bad about this Austrian woman, for I hate her and the whole court crowd besides. What right have they to strut and swell, and put on airs, while we have to work and suffer from morning till night? Why is their life nothing but jollity, and ours nothing but misery? I think I am of just as much consequence as the king, and my woman would look just as nice as the queen, if she would put on fine clothes and ride round in a gilded carriage. What puts them up and puts us down?"

"I tell you why. It is because we are ninnies and fools, and allow them to laugh in their sleeves at us, and make divinities out of themselves, before whom the people, or, as they call them, the rabble, are to fall upon their knees. But patience, patience! There will come a time when they will not laugh, nor compel the people to fall upon their knees and beg for favor. But no favor shall be granted to them. They shall meet their doom."

"Ha! I wish the time were here," shouted the cobbler, laughing; "and I hope I may be there when they meet their punishment."

"Well, my friend, that only depends upon yourself," said the stranger. "The time will come, and if you wish you can contribute your share, that it may approach with more rapid steps."

"What can I do? Tell me, for I am ready for every thing?"

"You can help whet the knife, that it may cut the better," said the stranger, with a horrible grimace. "Come, come, do not look at me so astonished, brother. There are already a good number of knife-sharpeners in the good city of Paris, and if you want to join their company, come this evening to me, and I will make you acquainted with some, and introduce you to our guild."

"Where do you live, sir, and what is your name?" asked the cobbler, with glowing curiosity.

"I live in the stable of the Count d'Artois, and my name is Jean Paul Marat."

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* See Madame de Campane. "Mémoires," vol. i.

"In the stable!" cried the cobbler. "My faith, I had not supposed you were a hostler or a coachman. It must be a funny sight, M. Marat, to see you mounted upon a horse."

"You think that such a big toad as I does not belong there exactly. Well, there you are right, brother Simon. My real business is not at all with the horses, but with the men in the stable. I am the horse-doctor, brother Simon, horse-doctor of the Count d'Artois; and I can assure you that I am a tolerably skilful doctor, for I have yoked together many a hostler and jockey whom the stable-keepers of the dear Artois have favored with a liberal dispensation of their lash. So, come this evening to me, not only that I may introduce you to good society, but come if you are sick. I will restore you, and it shall cost you nothing. I cure my brothers of the people without any pay, for it is not the right thing for brothers to take money one of another. So, brother Simon, I shall look for you this evening at the stable; but now I must leave you, for my sick folks are expecting me. Just one more word. If you come about seven o'clock to visit me, the old witch that keeps the door will certainly tell you that I am not at home. I will, therefore, give you the pass-word, which will allow you to go in. It is 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.' Good-by."

He nodded to the cobbler with a fearful grimace, and strode away quickly, in spite of not being able to lift his left foot over the broad square of the Hotel de Ville.

Master Simon looked after him at first with a derisive smile, and this diminutive figure, with his great head, on which a high, black felt hat just kept its position, seemed to amuse him excessively. All at once a thought struck him, and, like an arrow impelled from the bow, he dashed forward and ran after Jean Paul Marat.

"Doctor Marat, Doctor Marat!" he shouted, breathless, from a distance.

Marat stood still and looked around with a malicious glance.

"Well, what is it?" snarled he, "and who is calling my name so loud?"

"It is I, brother Marat," answered the cobbler, panting.

"I have been running after you because you have forgotten something."

"What is it?" asked Marat, feeling in his pockets with his long fingers. "I have my handkerchief and the piece of black bread that makes my breakfast. I have not forgotten anything."

"Yes, Jean Paul Marat, you have forgotten something," answered Master Simon. "You were going to tell me the names of the three chief paramours of the queen, and you have given only two—the Duke de Coigny and Lord Adhémar. You see I have a good memory, and retain all that you told me. So give me the name of the third one, for I will confess to you that I should like to have something to say about this matter in my club this afternoon, and it will make quite a sensation to come primed with this story about the Austrian woman."

"Well, I like that, I like that," said Marat, laughing so as to show his mouth from one ear to the other. "Now, that is a fine thing to have a club, where you can tell all these little stories about the queen and the court, and it will be a real pleasure to me to tell you any such matters as these to communicate to your club, for it is always a good thing to have any thing that takes place at Versailles and St. Cloud get talked over here at Paris among the dear good people."

"In St. Cloud?" asked the cobbler. "What is it that can happen there? That is nothing at all but a tiresome, old-forgotten pleasure palace of the king."

"It is lively enough there now, depend upon it," replied Marat, with his sardonic laugh. "King Louis the well beloved has given this palace to his wife, in order that she may establish there a larger harem than Trianon; that miserable, worthless little mouse-nest, where virtue, honor, and worth get hectored to death, is not large enough for her. Yes, yes, that fine, great palace of the French kings, the noble St. Cloud, is now the heritage and possession of this fine Austrian. And do you know what she has done? Close by the railing which separates the park from St. Cloud, and near the entrance, she has had a tablet put up, on which are written the conditions on which the public are allowed to enter the park."

"Well, that is nothing new," said the cobbler, impatiently. "They have such a board put up at all the royal gardens, and everywhere the public is ordered, in the name of the king, not to do any injury, and not to wander from the regular paths."

"Well, that is just; it is ordered in the name of the king; but in St. Cloud, it runs in the name of the queen. Yes, yes, there you may see in great letters upon the board; 'In the name of the queen.' * It is not enough for us that a king sits upon our neck, and imposes his commands upon us and binds us. We have now another ruler in France, prescribing laws and writing herself sovereign. We have a new police regulation in the name of the queen, a state within the state. Oh, the spider is making a jolly mesh of it! In the Trianon she made the beginning. There the police regulations have always been in the name of the queen; and because the policy was successful there, it extends its long finger still further, issues a new proclamation against the people, appropriates to itself new domain, and proposes to gradually encompass all France with its cords."

"That is rascally, that is wrong," cried the cobbler, raising his clinched fists in the air.

"But that is not all, brother. The queen goes still further. Down to the present time we have been accustomed to see the men who stoop to be the mean servants of tyrants array themselves in the monkey-jackets of the king's livery; but in St. Cloud, the Swiss guards at the gates, the palace servants, in one word, the entire menial corps, array themselves in the queen's livery; and if you are walking in the park of St. Cloud, you are no longer in France and on French soil, but in an Austrian province, where a foreigner can establish her harem and make her laws, and yet a virtuous and noble people does not rise in opposition to it."

"It does not know anything about it, brother Marat," said Simon, eagerly. "It knows very little about the vices and follies of the queen."

"Well, tell the people, then; report to them what I

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* "De par la reine" was the expression which was then in the mouth of all France and stirred everybody's rage.

have told you, and make it your duty that it be talked over among other friends, and made generally known."

"Oh! that shall be, that shall certainly be," said Simon, cheerily, "but you have not given me the name of that third lover yet."

"Oh! the third—that is Lord Besenval, the inspector general of the Swiss guard, the chief general of the army, and the commander of the Order of Louis. You see it is a great advantage for a man to be a lover of the queen, for in that way he comes to a high position. While King Louis the Fifteenth, that monster of vice, was living, Besenval was only colonel of the Swiss guard, and all he could do was once in a while to take part in the orgies at the Œil de Bœuf. But now the queen has raised him to a very high place. All St. Cloud and Trianon form the Œil de Bœuf, where Marie Antoinette celebrates her orgies, and General Besenval is made one of the first directors of the sports. Now you know every thing, do you not?"

"Yes, Doctor Marat, now I have a general run of every thing, and I thank you; but I hope that you will tell me more this evening, for your stories are vastly entertaining."

"Yes, indeed, I shall tell you plenty more of the same sort, for the queen takes good care that we shall always have material for such stories. Yet, unfortunately, I have no time now, for—"

"I know, I know, you have got to visit your sick people," said Simon, nodding confidentially to him. "I will not detain you any longer. Good-by, my dear Doctor Marat. We shall meet this evening."

He sprang quickly away, and soon disappeared round the next corner. Marat looked after him with a wicked, triumphant expression in his features.

"So far good, so far good," muttered he, shaking his head with choler. "In this way I have got to win over the soldiers and the people to freedom. The cobbler will make an able and practicable soldier, and with his nice little stories, he will win over a whole company. Triumph on, you proud Bourbons; go on dreaming in your gilded palaces, surrounded by your Swiss guards. Keep on believing that you have the power in your hands, and that no one can take it from you. The time will come when the people will disturb your fine dream, and when the little, despised, ugly Marat, whom no one now knows, and who creeps around in your stables like a poisonous rat, shall confront you as a power before which you shall shrink away and throw yourselves trembling into the dust. There shall go by no day in which I and my friends shall not win soldiers for our side, and the silly, simple fool, Marie Antoinette, makes it an easy thing for us. Go on committing your childish pranks, which, when the time shall threaten a little, will justify the most villanous deeds and the most shameless acts, and I will keep the run of all the turns of the times, and this fine young queen cannot desire that we should look at the world with such simple eyes as she does. Yes, fair Queen Marie Antoinette, thou hast thy Swiss guards, who fight for thee, and thou must pay them; but I, I have only one soldier who takes ground for me against thee, and whom I do not have to pay at all. My soldier's name is Calumny. I tell thee, fair queen, with this ally I can overcome all thy Swiss guards, and the whole horde of thy armies. For, on the earth there is no army corps that is so strong as Calumny. Hurrah! long life to thee, my sworn ally, Calumny!"

CHAPTER II.

MADAME ADELAIDE.

QUEEN MARIE ANTOINETTE had returned, after her Paris ride, to her own Versailles. She was silent the whole of the way, and the Duchess de Polignac had sought in vain to cheer her friend with light and pleasant talk, and drive away the clouds from her lofty brow. Marie Antoinette had only responded by enforced smiles and half-words, and then, settling back into the carriage, had gazed with dreamy looks into the heavens, whose cheerful blue called out no reflection upon the fair face of the queen.

As they drew into the great court of the palace at Versailles, the drum-beat of the Swiss guards, presenting arms, and the general stir which followed the approach of the queen, appeared to awaken her from her sorrowful thoughts, and she straightened herself up and cast her glances about. They fell quite accidentally upon the child which was in the arms of the nurse opposite, and which, with great wide-open eyes, was looking up to the heavens, as its mother had done before.

In the intensity of her motherly love, the queen stretched out her arms to the child and drew it to her heart, and pressed a burning kiss upon its lips.

"Ah! my child, my dear child," said she, softly, "you have to-day, for the first time, made your entry into Paris, and heard the acclamations of the people. May you, so long as you live, always be the recipient of kindly greetings, and never again hear such words as that dreadful man spoke to us to-day!"

She pressed the little Duke of Normandy closely to her heart, and quite forgot that she was all this while in the carriage; that near the open portal the hostlers and lackeys were awaiting in a respectful posture the dismounting of the queen; that the drums were all the while beating, and that the guards were standing before the gates in the fixed attitude of presenting arms.

The Duchess de Polignac ventured to suggest in softly-spoken words the necessity of dismounting, and the queen, with her little boy in her arms, sprang lightly and spiritedly, without accepting the assistance of the master of the grooms, out of the carriage, smiling cheerily, greeting the assembled chamberlains as she passed by, hurried into the palace and ran up the great marble staircase. The Duchess de Polignac made haste to follow her, while the Princess Therese and the dauphin were received by their dames of honor and led into their respective apartments. The Norman nurse, shaking her head, hurried after the queen, and the chamberlains and both the maids of honor, shaking their heads, too, followed her into the great antechamber. After riding out, the queen was in the habit of dismissing them there, but to-day Marie Antoinette had gone into her own suite of rooms without saying a word, and the door was already closed.

"What shall we do now?" asked both the maids of honor of the cavaliers, and received only a shrug of the shoulders for reply.

"We shall have to wait," at last said the Marchioness de Mailly. "Perhaps her majesty will have the kindness to remember us and to permit us to withdraw."

"And if she should happen to forget it," answered the Princess de Chimay, "we shall have to stand here the whole day, while the queen in Trianon is amusing herself with the fantastic pastoral plays."

"Yes, certainly, there is a country festival in Trianon to-day," said the Prince de Castines, shrugging his shoulders, "and it might easily happen that we should be forgotten, and, like the unforgetable wife of Lot, have to stand here playing the ridiculous part of pillars of salt."

"No, there comes our deliverance," whispered the Marchioness de Mailly, pointing to a carriage which just then came rolling across the broad palace-square. "It was yesterday resolved in secret council at the Count de Provence's, that Madame Adelaide should make one more attempt to bring the queen to reason, and make her understand what is becoming and what is unbecoming to a Queen of France. Now look you, in accordance with this resolve, Madame Adelaide is coming to Versailles to pay a visit to her distinguished niece."

Just then the carriage of the Princess Adelaide, daughter of Louis the Fifteenth, and aunt of Louis the Sixteenth, drove through the great gate into the guarded vestibule of the palace; two outriders rode in advance, two lackeys stood on the stand behind the carriage, and upon the step on each side, a page in richly-embroidered garments.

Before the middle portal, which could only be used by the royal family, and which had never been desecrated by the entrance of one who was "lowly-born," the carriage came to a stand-still. The lackeys hastened to open the gate, and a lady, advanced in years, gross in form, with an irritable face well pitted with pock-marks, and wearing no other expression than supercilious pride and a haughty indifference, dismounted with some difficulty, leaning upon the shoulder of her page, and toiled up the steps which conducted to the great vestibule.

The runner sprang before her up the great staircase covered with its carpets, and with his long staff rapped on the door of the first antechamber that led to the apartments of the queen. "Madame Adelaide!" shouted he with a loud voice, and the lackey repeated it in the same tone, quickly opening the door of the second antechamber; and the word was taken up by the chamberlains, and repeated and carried along where the queen was sitting.

Marie Antoinette shrugged herself together a little at this announcement, which interrupted her while engaged in charming unrestrained conversation with the Duchess de Polignac, and a shadow flitted across her lofty brow.

With fiery quickness she flung her arms around the neck of her friend, and pressed a kiss upon her lips. "Farewell, Julia; Madame Adelaide is coming: that is just the same as irritation and annoyance. She may not bear the least suspicion of this upon her fine and dearly-loved face, and just because they are not there, I must tell you, my dear friend, to leave me. But hold yourself in readiness, after Madame Annoyance has left me, to ride with me to Trianon. The queen must remain here half an hour still, but she will be rewarded for it, for Marie Antoinette will afterward go with her Julia to Trianon to spend a half day of pleasure with her husband and friends."

"And to impart to her friends an eternity of blissful recollections," said the duchess, with a charming smile, pressing the hand of the queen to her lips, and taking her leave with inimitable grace, in order to pass out through the little side-door which entered the corridor through a porcelain cabinet, intending then to visit the rooms of the 'children of France.'

At the same moment in which the lofty, dignified form of the duchess disappeared through the side-door, both wings of the main entrance were flung open, and the two maids of honor of the queen advanced to the threshold, and made so deep a reverence that their immense petticoats expanded like a kettle. Then they took a step backward, made another reverence so profound that their heads, bearing *coiffures* a foot and a half high, fell upon their breasts.

"Madame Adelaide!" they both ejaculated as with one voice, slowly straightening themselves up and taking their places at the sides of the door.

The princess now appeared upon the threshold; behind her, her maids of honor and master of ceremonies, the grand-chamberlain, the pages, and both masters of grooms, standing in the great antechambers.

At the appearance of the maids of honor, Marie Antoinette had taken her position in the middle of the chamber, and could not repress a faint smile, as with erect head she noticed the confusion instant upon the princess's imposing entrance.

Madame Adelaide advanced some steps, for the queen did not change her position nor hasten toward her as she had perhaps expected; her irritated look increased still more, and she did not take a seat.

"I come perhaps at an inconvenient season for your majesty," said she, with a tart smile. "The queen perhaps was just upon the point of going to Trianon, whither, as I hear, the king has already proceeded?"

"Has your highness heard that?" asked the queen, smiling. "I wonder what sharp ears Madame Adelaide always has to catch such a trifling rumor, while my younger ones have never caught the least hint of the important approach of the princess, and so I am equally surprised and delighted at the unexpected appearance of my gracious and loving aunt."

Every one of these words, which were spoken so cheerily and with such a pleasant smile, seemed to pierce the princess like the prick of a needle, and caused her to press her lips together in just such a way as if she wanted to check an outcry of pain or suppress some hidden rage. Marie Antoinette, while speaking of the sharp ears which madame *always* had, had hinted at the advanced age no less than at the curiosity of the princess, and had brought her young and unburdened ears into very advantageous contrast with them.

"Would your majesty grant me the favor of an interview?" asked Madame Adelaide, who did not possess the power of entering on a contest with her exalted niece, with sharp yet graceful words.

"I am prepared with all pleasure," answered the queen, cheerfully; "and it depends entirely upon madame whether the audience shall be private or public."

"I beg for a half hour of entire privacy," said Madame Adelaide, with choler.

"A private audience, ladies!" called the queen to her maids of honor, as motioning with her hand she dismissed them. Then she directed her great brilliant eyes to the door of the antechamber. "My lord grooms, in half an hour I should like to have my carriage ready for Trianon."

The maids of honor withdrew into the great antechamber, and closed the doors behind them.

The queen and Madame Adelaide were alone.

"Let us sit, if it pleases you," said Marie Antoinette, motioning the princess to an arm-chair, while she took her own place upon a simple ottoman. "You have something to say to me, and I am entirely ready to hear you."

"Would to God, madame, that you would not only hear my words," said Madame Adelaide, with a sigh, "but that you would take them to heart as well!"

"If they deserve it, I certainly shall," said the queen, smiling.

"They certainly do deserve it," said the princess, "for what I aim at in my words concerns the peace, the security, the honor of our family. Madame, allow me first to disburden myself of something that has been committed to me. My noble and pious sister, Madame Louise, has given me this letter for your majesty, and in her name I ask our royal niece to read the same at once and in my presence."

She drew from the great reticule, which was attached to her arm by its silken cords, a sealed letter, and handed it to the queen.

But Marie Antoinette did not raise her hand to receive it, but shook her head as if in refusal, and yet with so eager a motion that her elaborate *coiffure* fairly trembled.

"I beg your pardon, madame," said she, earnestly, "but I cannot receive this letter from the prioress of the Carmelite convent at St. Denis; for you well know that when Madame Louise sent me some years ago, through your highness, a letter which I read, that I never again will receive and read letters from the prioress. Have the goodness, then, to take this back to the sender."

"You know, madame, that this is an affront directed against a princess of France!" was the emphatic reply.

"I know, madame, that that letter which I then received from Madame Louise was an affront directed by the princess against the Queen of France, and I shall protect the majesty of my station from a similar affront. Unquestionably this letter is similar in tone to that one. That one contained charges which went so far as to involve open condemnation, and contained proffers of counsel which meant little less than calumny.* And what would this be likely to contain different, which your highness takes the trouble to bring to me?"

"Well," cried Madame Adelaide, angrily, "its purport may be similar to that of the former letter; for, unfortunately, the causes are the same, and we may not wonder if the effects are also the same."

"Ah! one can easily see that your highness knows the contents of the letter," said Marie Antoinette, smiling, "and you will therefore certainly pardon me for not reading it. It was unquestionably written in the presence of your highness, in the pious cell of the prioress. She gave over for a while her prayers for the repose of the departed king, in order to busy herself a little with worldly things, and to listen to the calumnies which Madame Adelaide, or the Count de Provence, or the Cardinal de Rohan, or some other of the enemies of my person, have sought to hurl against the Queen of France."

"Calumnies!" replied Madame Adelaide, with an angry flash in her eyes. "Would to God, madame, that it were calumnies with which we have to do, and that all these things which trouble and disturb us were only malicious calumnies, and not sober facts!"

"And will your highness not have the goodness to communicate these facts to me?" said the queen, undisturbed, but smiling, and so only increasing the anger of the princess.

"These facts are of so varied kinds that it would be a difficult thing to choose out any separate ones among them," cried she, with fiery tone. "Every day, every hour of the life of your majesty, brings new facts to light."

"Oh!" said Marie Antoinette, "I had no idea that your highness had such tender care for me."

"And I had no idea, madame, that your frivolity went so far as continually to wound the laws, the customs, and the hallowed order of things. You do it—you do it, scorning every thing established with the random wantonness of a child that plays with fire, and does not know that the waves will flare up and consume it. Madame, I have come here to warn you once more, and for the last time."

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* Gondrecourt, "Histoire de Marie Antoinette," p. 59.

"God be thanked, for the last time!" cried the queen, with a charming glance of her eyes.

"I conjure you, queen, for your own sake, for your husband's, for your children's, change your course; take a new direction; leave the path of danger on which you are hastening to irretrievable destruction."

The countenance of the queen, before so pleasant and animated, now darkened. Her smile gave way to a deep earnestness; she raised her head proudly and put on a royal bearing.

"Madame," said she, "up to this time I have been inclined to meet your biting philippics with the quiet indifference which innocence gives, and to remain mindful of the reverence due to age, and not to forget the harsh eyes with which the aged always look upon the deeds of youth. But you compel me to take the matter more earnestly to heart, for you join to my name that of my husband and my children, and so you appeal to my heart of hearts. Now, then, tell me, madame, what you have to bring against me."

"Your boundless frivolity, your culpable short-sightedness, your foolish pleasures, your extravagance, your love of finery, your mixing with politics, your excessive jovialness, your entertainments, your—"

Marie Antoinette interrupted this series of charges with loud, merry laughter, which more enraged the princess than the most stinging words would have done.

"Yes," she continued, "you are frivolous, for you suppose the life of a queen is one clear summer's day, to be devoted to nothing but singing and laughing. You are short-sighted, for you do not see that the flowers of this summer's day in which you rejoice, only bloom above an abyss into which you, with your wanton dancing, are about to plunge. You indulge in foolish pleasures, instead of, as becomes a Queen of France, passing your life in seclusion, in devout meditation, in the exercise of beneficence, in pious deeds. You are a spendthrift, for you give the income of France to your favorites, to this Polignac family, which it has been reckoned receives alone a twentieth part of the whole income of the state; to these gracious lords and ladies of your so-called 'society,' supporting them in their frivolity, allowing them to make golden gain out of you. You are a lover of finery, not holding it beneath your dignity to spend whole hours with a poor milliner; allowing a man to dress your hair, and afterward to go into the toilet chambers of the Parisian dames, that their hair may be dressed by the same hands which have arranged the hair of a queen, and to imitate the *coiffure* which the Queen of France wears. And what kind of a *coiffure* is that which, invented by a queen, is baptized with a fantastic name, and carried through Paris, France, and all Europe?"

"But," said Maire Antoinette, with comical pathos, "these *coiffures* have, some of them, horrid names. We have, for example, the 'hog's bristles *coiffure*,' the 'flea-bite *coiffure*,' the 'dying dog,' the 'flame of love,' 'modesty's cap,' a—"

"A queen's levee," interrupted the princess; "a love's nest of Marie Antoinette. Yes, we have come to that pass that the fashions are named after the queen, and all acquire a certain frivolous character, so that all the men and all the honorable women of Paris are in despair because the thoughts of their daughters, infected with the millinery tastes of the queen and the court, shun all noble thoughts, and only busy themselves with mere affairs of taste. I have shown you, and you will not be able to deny it, madame, that this decline in manners, which has been engendered by this love of finery, proceeds from you, and from you alone; that not only your love of finery is to blame, but also your coquetry, your joviality, and these unheard-of indescribable orgies to which the Queen of France surrenders herself, and to which she even allures her own husband, the King of France, the oldest son of the Church."

"What does your highness mean?" asked the queen. "Of what entertainments are you speaking?"

"I am speaking of the entertainments which are celebrated in Trianon, to the perversion of all usage and all good manners. Of those orgies in which the queen transforms herself into a shepherdess, and permits the ladies of her court, who ought to appear before her with bended knee and with downcast eyes, to clothe themselves like her, and to put on the same bearing as the queen's! I speak of those orgies where the king, enchanted by the charms of his wife, and allured by her coquetry, so far forgets his royal rank as even to take part himself in this stupid frivolity, and to bear a share in this trivial masquerading. And this queen, whose loud laughter fills the groves of Trianon, and who sometimes finds her pleasure in imitating the lowing of cows or the bleating of goats—this queen will afterward put on the bearing of a statesman, and will, with those hands which have just got through arranging an 'allegorical head-dress,' dip into the machinery of state, interrupting the arrangements of her entertainments to busy herself with politics, to set aside old, cherished ministers, to bring her friends and favorites into their places, and to make the king the mere executor of her will."

"Madame," said the queen, as glowing with anger and with eyes of flame she rose from her seat—"madame, this is going too far, this oversteps the bounds that every one, even the princesses of the royal house, owe to their sovereign. I have allowed you to subject to your biting criticism my outer life, my pleasures, and my dress, but I do not allow you to take in hand my inner life—my relations to my husband and my personal honor. You presume to speak of my favorites. I demand of you to name them, and if you can show that there is one man to whom I show any other favor than a gracious queen may show to a servant, a subject whom she can honor and trust, I desire that you would give his name to the king, and that a close investigation be made into the case. I have friends; yes, thank Heaven! I have friends who prize me highly, and who are every hour prepared to give their life for their queen. I have true and faithful servants; but no one will appear and give evidence that Marie Antoinette has ever had an illicit lover. My only lover has been the king, my husband, and I hope before God that he will always remain so, so long as I live. But this is exactly what the noble princesses my aunts, what the Count de Provence, and the whole party of the old court, never will forgive me for. I have had the good fortune to win the love of my husband. The king, despite all calumnies and all intrigues, lowered his glance to the poor young woman who stood solitary near him, and whom he had been taught to prize lightly and to despise, and then he found that she was not so simple, stupid, and ugly, as she had been painted. He began to take some notice of her, and then, God be thanked, he overlooked the fact that she was of Austrian blood, and that the policy of his predecessor had urged her upon him: his heart warmed to her in love, and Marie Antoinette received this love as a gracious gift of God, as the happiness of her life. Yes, madame, I may say it with pride and joy, the king loves me, he trusts me, and therefore his wife stands nearer to him than even his exalted aunts, and I am the one whom he most trusts and whom he selects to be his chief adviser. But this is just the offence which will never be forgiven me: it has fallen to my lot to take from my enemies and opponents their influence over my husband. The time has gone by when Madame Adelaide could gain an attentive ear when she came to the king, and in her passionate rage charged me with unheard-of crimes, which had no basis excepting that in some little matters I had loosened the ancient chains of etiquette; the time is past when Madame Louise could presume to drive me with her flashing anger from her pious cell and make me kneel in the dust; and when it was permitted to the Count de la Morch to accuse the queen before the king of having risen in time to behold the rising of the sun at Versailles, in company with her whole court. The king loves me, and Madame Adelaide is no longer the political counsellor of the king; the ministers will no longer be appointed according to her dictate, and the great questions of the cabinet are decided without appealing to her! I know that this is a new offence which you lay to my charge, and that by your calumniations and suspicions you make me suffer the penalty for it. I know that the Count de Provence stoops to direct epigrams and pamphlets against his sister-in-law, his sovereign, and through the agency of his creatures to scatter them through Paris. I know that in his saloons all the enemies of the queen are welcome, and that charges against me are made without rebuke, and that there the weapons are forged with which I am assailed. But take care lest some day these weapons be turned against you! It is you who are imperilling the kingdom, and undermining the throne, for you do not hesitate setting before the people an example that nothing is sacred to you; that the dignity of the throne no longer has an existence, but that it may be defiled with vile insinuations, and the most poisonous arrows directed against those who wear the crown of St. Louis on their head. But all you, the aunts, the brothers of the king, and the whole swarm of their intimates and dependents, you are all undermining the monarchy, for you forget that the foreigner, the Austrian, as you call her—that she is Queen of France, your sovereign, your lord, and that you are nothing better than her subjects. You are criminals, you are high traitors!"

"Madame," cried the Princess Adelaide, "Madame, what language is this that—"

"It is the language of a woman in reply to a calumniator, the language of a queen to a rebellious subject. Madame, have the goodness not to answer me again. You have come into the palace of your sovereign to accuse her, and she has answered you as becomes her station. Now we have nothing more to say to each other. You requested a half hour's private audience with me, and the time has gone. Farewell, madame; my carriage stands ready, and I go to Trianon. I shall, however, say nothing to the king respecting the new attack which you have made upon me, and I promise you that I shall forget it and forgive it."

She nodded lightly, turned herself around, and, with lofty carriage and proud self-possession, left the apartment.

Princess Adelaide looked after her with an expression of the deepest hate, and entirely forgetful of her lofty station, even raised her hand threateningly in the direction of the door through which the noble figure of the queen had just vanished. "I shall not forget nor forgive," muttered she. "I shall have my revenge on this impudent person who dares to threaten me and even to defy me, and who calls herself my sovereign. This Austrian, a sovereign of the princess royal of France! We will show her where are the limits of her power, and where are the limits of France! She shall go back to Austria; we want her not, this Austrian who dares to defy us."

Proud and erect though the bearing was with which the queen left Madame Adelaide, she had hardly entered her own room and closed the door which separated her from her enemy, when she sank groaning upon a seat, and a flood of tears streamed from her eyes.

"Oh, Campan, Campan! what have I been compelled to hear?" cried she, bitterly. "With what expressions have they ventured to address the Queen of France!"

Madame de Campan, the first lady-in-waiting on the queen, who had just then entered the porcelain room, hastened to her mistress, and, sinking upon her knees, pressed the fallen hand of the queen to her lips.

"Your majesty is weeping!" she whispered with her mild, sympathetic voice. "Your majesty has given the princess the satisfaction of knowing that she has succeeded in drawing tears from the Queen of France, and reddening her beautiful eyes."

"No, I will not give her this pleasure," said the queen, quickly raising herself up and drying her eyes. "I will be merry, and why do I weep? She sought to make me sick; she sought to wound me, but I have given back the sickness, and the wounds which I have inflicted upon her will not so soon heal."

"Has your majesty inflicted anything upon the princess?" cried Madame de Campan, in agitation.

"Yes," answered Marie Antoinette, with triumphant joy. "I have scourged her, I have wounded her, for I have distinctly intimated to her that I am Queen of France, and she my subject. I have told her, that when she dares direct her calumnies against the queen, she is guilty of high-treason."

"Oh!" exclaimed Madame de Campan, "the proud princess will never pardon that. Your majesty has now become her irreconcilable enemy, and she will leave no stone unturned to revenge herself upon you."

"She may attempt to revenge herself upon me," cried the queen, whose countenance began to brighten up once more. "I fear neither her nor her whole set. All their arrows will fall powerless at my feet, for the love of my husband and my pure conscience form the protection which secures me. And what can these people accomplish against me? They can slander me, that is all. But their calumnies will, in the end, prove that it is lies they tell, and no one will give them confidence more."

"Ah! your majesty does not know the wickedness of the world," sighed Campan, sadly. "Your majesty believes that the good are not cowardly, and that the bad are not reckless. Your majesty does not know that the bad have it in their power to corrupt public opinion; and that then the good have not the courage to meet this corrupting influence. But public opinion is a monster that brings the charge, passes judgment, pronounces the sentence, and inflicts the punishment in one person. Who thinks lightly of it, arrays against himself an enemy stronger than a whole army, and less open to entreaty than death."

"Ah!" cried the queen, raising her head proudly, "I do not fear this enemy. She shall not dare to attack me. She shall crouch and shrink before my gaze as the lion does when confronted by the eye of a virgin. I am pure and blameless. I pledged my troth to my husband before he loved me, and how shall I now break it, when he does love me, and is the father of my dear children? And now, enough of these disagreeable things that want to cast their vileness upon us! And the sun is shining so splendidly, and they are waiting for me in Trianon! Come, Campan, come; the queen will take the form of a happy wife."

Marie Antoinette hastened before her lady-in-waiting, hurried into her toilet-chamber in advance of her lady-in-waiting, who followed, sighing and shaking her head, and endeavored with her own hands to loosen the stiff corset of her robe, and to free herself from the immense crinoline which imprisoned her noble form.

"Off with these garments of state and royal robes," said Marie Antoinette, gliding out of the stiff apparel, and standing in a light, white undergarment, with bare shoulders and arms. "Give me a white percale dress and a gauze mantle with it."

"Will your majesty appear again in this simple costume?" asked Madame de Campan, sighing.

"Certainly, I will," cried she; "I am going to Trianon, to my much-loved country-house. You must know, Campan, that the king has promised to spend every afternoon of a whole week with me at Trianon, and that there we are going to enjoy life, nature, and solitude. So, for a whole week, the king will only be king in the forenoon, and in the afternoon a respectable miller in the village Trianon. Now, is not that a merry thought, Campan? And do you not see that I cannot go to Trianon in any other than a light white dress?"

"Yes, your majesty, I understand; but I was only thinking that the tradespeople of Lyons had just presented a paper to your majesty, in which they complain of the decadence of the silk manufacture, explaining it on the ground that your majesty has a preference for white clothing, and stating that all the ladies feel obliged to follow the example of their queen, and lay their silk robes aside."

"And do you know, too," asked Marie Antoinette, "that Madame Adelaide has herself supported this ridiculous paper of the Lyonnese merchants, giving out that I wear white percale because I want to do my brother, the Emperor Joseph, a service, and so ordered these white goods from the Netherlands? Ah, let us leave these follies of the wicked and the stupid. They shall not prevent my wearing white clothes and being happy in Trianon. Give me a white dress quickly, Campan."

"Pardon, your majesty, but I must first summon the ladies of the robing-room," answered Madame de Campan, turning to the door of the sleeping-room.

"Oh, why all this parade?" sighed the queen. "Can I never be free from the fetters of all this ceremony? Could you not yourself, Campan, put a simple dress upon me?"

"Your majesty, I am only a poor, powerless being, and I fear enmities. The ladies would never forgive me if I should encroach upon their rights and separate them from the adored person of the queen. It is their right, it is their duty to draw the robe upon the person of your majesty, and to secure your shoes. I beg, therefore, your gracious permission to allow the ladies to come in."

"Well, do it then," sighed the queen. "Let me bear the fetters here in Versailles until the last moment. I shall have my compensation in Trianon. Be assured I shall have my compensation there."

A quarter of an hour later the queen was arrayed in her changed attire, and came out from the toilet-chamber. The stiff crinoline had disappeared; the whalebone corset, with the long projecting point, was cast aside; and the high *coiffure*, which Leonard had so elaborately made up in the morning, was no more to be seen. A white robe, decorated at the bottom with a simple volante, fell in broad artistic folds over her noble figure, whose full proportions had been concealed by the rigid state dress. A simple waist encircled her bust, and was held together by a blue sash, which hung in long ends at her left side. Broad cuffs, held together with simple, narrow lace, fell down as far as the wrist, but through the thin material could be seen the fair form of her beautiful arms; and the white triangle of gauze which she had thrown over her naked neck, did not entirely veil the graceful lines of her full shoulders and her noble bust. Her hair, deprived of its unnatural disfigurement, and almost entirely freed from powder, arched itself above her fine forehead in a light *toupet*, and fell upon her shoulders in rich brown locks, on which only a mere breath of powder had been blown. On her arm the queen carried a great, round, straw hat, secured by blue ribbons, and over her fair, white hands she had drawn gloves of black netting.

Thus, with beaming countenance, with blushing cheeks, and with smiles curling around her full red lips; thus, all innocence, merriment, and cheerfulness, Marie Antoinette entered the sitting-room, where the Duchess de Polignac was waiting for her, in an attire precisely like that of the queen.

The latter flew to the duchess with the quickness of a young girl, with the tenderness of a sister, and drew her arm within that of her friend.

"Come, Julia," said she, "let us leave the world and enter paradise."

"Ah, I am afraid of paradise," cried the duchess, with a merry smile. "I have a horror of the serpent."

"You shall find no serpents there, my Julia," said the queen, drawing the arm of the duchess to herself. "Lean upon me, my friend, and be persuaded that I will defend you against every serpent, and every low, creeping thing."

"Oh, I fear the serpent more for my adored queen than for myself. What is there in me to harm? But your majesty is exposed on every side to attack."

"Oh, why, Julia," sighed the queen—"why do you address me with the stiff, formal title of majesty when we are alone together? Why do you not forget for a little etiquette when there is nobody by to hear us?"

"Your majesty," laughed the duchess, "we are in Versailles, and the walls have ears."

"It is true," cried the queen, with quickly-restored merriment, "we are here in Versailles; that is your exculpation. Come, let us hasten to leave this proud, royal palace, and get away to the society of beautiful Nature, where there are no walls to hear us, but only God and Nature. Come, Julia."

She drew the duchess quickly out through the side door, which led to the little corridor, and thence to the adjacent staircase, and over the small court to one of the minor gates of the palace, leading to the park. The *coupé* of the queen was standing before this door, and the master of the stole and the lackeys were awaiting the approach of the queen.

Marie Antoinette sprang like a gazelle into the carriage, and then extended her hand to the duchess to assist her to ascend.

"Forward, forward!" cried the queen to the coachman, "and drive with all haste, as if the horses had wings, for I long to fly. Forward! oh, forward!"

CHAPTER III.

TRIANON.

FLY, ye steeds, fly! Bear the Queen of France away from the stiff, proud Versailles; from the palaces of kings, where every thing breathes of exaltation, greatness, and unapproachableness; bear her to little, simple, pretty Trianon,—to the dream of paradise, where all is innocence, simplicity, and peace; where the queen may be a woman, and a happy one, too, and where Marie Antoinette has the right to banish etiquette, and live in accordance with her inclinations, wishes, and humors.

Yes, truly, the fiery steeds have transformed themselves into birds; they cut the air, they scarcely touch the ground, and hardly can the driver restrain them when they reach the fence which separates the garden of Trianon from Versailles.

Light as a gazelle, happy as a young girl that knows nothing of the cares and burdens of life, Marie Antoinette sprang out of the carriage before the chamberlain had time to open the gate with its double wings, to let the queen pass in as a queen ought. Laughing, she glided through the little side gate, which sufficed for the more unpretending visitor of Trianon, and took the arm of her friend the Duchess de Polignac, in order to turn with her into one of the side alleys. But, before doing so, she turned to the chamberlain, who, standing in a respectful attitude, was awaiting the commands of his mistress.

"Weber," said she to him, in the pleasant Austrian dialect, the language of her early home—"Weber, there is no need for you to follow us. The day is yours. You are free, as I am too. Meanwhile, if you meet his majesty, tell him that I have gone to the small palace, and that, if it pleases his majesty, he may await me in my little village at the mill.

"And now, come, my Julia," said she, turning to the duchess, and drawing her forward with gentle violence, "now let us be merry and happy. I am no longer a queen, God be thanked! I am neither more nor less than anybody else. That is the reason I was so well pleased to come through the small door just now. Through a narrow gate alone we can enter paradise, and I am entering paradise now. Oh, do you not see, my friend, that the trees, the flowers, the bushes, every thing here is free from the dust of earth; that even the heaven has another color, and looks down upon me brilliant and blue, like the eye of God?"

"It is just," answered the Duchess de Polignac, "because you are seeing every thing with other eyes, your majesty."

"Your majesty!" cried Marie Antoinette. "You love me no longer; your heart is estranged from me, since you address me with this cold title. In Versailles, you had a valid plea; but here, Julia, what can you offer in justification? The flowers are not listeners, the bushes have not ears, like the walls of Versailles, to spy out our privacy."

"I say nothing for my exculpation," answered the duchess, throwing her arm with a playful movement around the neck of the queen, and imprinting a kiss upon the lofty brow of Marie Antoinette. "I only ask your pardon, and promise that I will be obedient and not disturb my friend's dream of paradise all day long by an ill-timed word. Now will you forgive me, Marie?"

"With all my soul, Julia," answered the queen, nodding to her in a friendly way. "And now, Julia, as we have a happy vacation day before us, we will enjoy it like two young girls who are celebrating the birthday of their grandmother after escaping from a boarding-school. Let us see which of us is the swiftest of foot. We will make a wager on it. See, there gleams our little house out from the shrubbery; let us see which of us gets there first."

"Without stopping once in the run?" asked the duchess, amazed.

"I make no conditions; I only say, let us see who gets there first. If you win, Julia, I will give you the privilege of nominating a man to have the first place in my Swiss guards, and you may select the *protégé* in whose behalf you were pleading yesterday. Come, let us run. One!—"

"No, Marie," interrupted the duchess. "Supposing that you are the first, what shall I give you?"

"A kiss—a hearty kiss—Julia. Now, forward! One, two, three!"

And, speaking these words in merry accents, Marie Antoinette sprang forward along the narrow walk. The round straw hat which covered her head was tossed up on both sides; the blue ribbons fluttered in the wind; the white dress puffed up; and the grand-chamberlain of the queen and Madame Adelaide would have been horrified if they could have seen the queen flying along like a girl escaped from the boarding-school.

But she, she never thought of there being any thing improper in the run; she looked forward to the goal with laughing glances, as the white house emerged more and more from the verdure by which it was surrounded, and then sideways at her friend, who had not been able to gain a single step upon her.

"Forward, forward!" shouted the queen; "I will and I must win, for the prize is a kiss from my Julia." And with renewed speed the queen dashed along. The lane opened and terminated in a square in front of the palace. The queen stopped in her course, and turned round to see her friend, who had been left far behind her.

As soon as the duchess saw it she tried to quicken her steps, and began to run again, but Marie Antoinette motioned with her hand, and went rapidly back to meet her.

"You shall not make any more effort, Julia," said she. "I have won, and you cannot bring my victory into question."

"And I do not wish to," answered the duchess, with a merry look of defiance on her gentle features. "I really did not wish to win, for it would have seemed as if I had to win what I want on the turn of a merry game. You have done wrong, Marie Antoinette. You want me to forget here in Trianon that you are the Queen of France. But you yourself do not forget it. Only the queen can propose such a prize as you have set, and only the queen can ask so insignificant a boon on the other side. You have made it impossible for me to win, for you know well that I am not selfish."

"I know it, and that is just the reason why I love you so dearly, Julia. I have done wrong," she went on to say with her gentle, sweet voice. "I see it, and I beg your forgiveness. Give me now as a proof that you do forgive me—give me the prize which I have won—a kiss, Julia, a kiss."

"Not here," answered the duchess. "O, no, not here, Marie. Do not you see that the doors of the saloons are open, and that your company are all assembled. They would all envy me; they would all be jealous if they were to see the preference which you show for me."

"Let them be jealous, let them envy you," cried the queen; "the whole world shall know that Julia de Polignac is my best-loved friend, that next to husband and children, I love no one so well as her."

With gentle violence the queen threw both her arms around the neck of the duchess, and kissed her passionately.

"Did you notice," said the Baron de Besenval to Lord Adhémar, with whom he was playing a game of backgammon in the saloon, "did you notice the tableau that the queen is presenting, taking for her theme a group representing Friendship?"

"I wish it were in my power to reproduce this wonderful group in marble," answered Lord Adhémar, laughing. "It would be a companion-piece to Orestes and Pylades."

"But which," asked the Duchess de Guémene, looking up from her embroidery, "which would be the companion of Orestes, pursued of Furies, surrounded by serpents?"

"That is the queen," answered the Count de Vaudreuil, who was sitting at the piano and practising a new piece of music. "The queen is the womanly Orestes: the Furies are the three royal aunts; and the serpents—pardon me, ladies—are, with the exception of yourselves, most all the ladies of Paris."

"You are malicious, count," cried Madame de Morsan, "and were we by any chance not here, you would reckon us among the serpents."

"If I should do so," said Count Vaudreuil, laughing, "I should only wish to take the apple from you, in order to be driven out of paradise with you. But still! the queen is coming."

Yes, just then the queen entered the apartment. Her cheeks were glowing red by reason of her run, her bosom heaved violently with her hurried, agitated breathing. Her hat had fallen upon one side, and the dark blond hair was thrown about in wild confusion.

It was not the queen who entered the saloon, it was only Marie Antoinette, the simple, young woman, greeting her friends with brilliant glances and lively nods. It had been made a rule with her, that when she entered, no one should rise, nor leave the embroidery, or piano-playing, or any other occupation.

The women remained at their work, Lords Besenval and Adhémar went on playing their game of backgammon, and only the Count de Vaudreuil rose from his place at the approach of the queen.

"What have you been playing, count?" asked Marie Antoinette.

"I beg your pardon, if I leave your question unanswered," replied the count, with a gentle inclination of the head. "Your majesty has such a fine ear, that you must doubtless recognize the composer in the music. It is an entirely new composition, and I have taken the license of arranging it for four hands. If your majesty would perhaps be inclined—"

"Come," interrupted the queen, "let us try it at once."

Quickly, and with feverish impatience, she drew her black netted gloves from her delicate white hands, and at once took her place next to the count, on the seat already prepared for her.

"Will not the music be too difficult for me to play?" asked she, timidly.

"Nothing is too difficult for the Queen of France."

"But there is a great deal that is too difficult for the *dilettante*, Marie Antoinette," sighed the queen. "Meanwhile, we will begin and try it."

And with great facility and lightness of touch, the queen began to play the base of the piece which had been arranged by the Count de Vaudreuil for four hands. But the longer she played, the more the laughter and the unrestrained gayety disappeared from the features of the queen. Her noble countenance assumed an expression of deep earnestness, her eye kindled with feeling, and the cheeks which before had become purple-red with the exercise of playing, now paled with deep inward emotion.

All at once, in the very midst of the grand and impassioned strains, Marie Antoinette stopped, and, under the strength of her feeling, rose from her seat.

"Only Gluck can have written this!" cried she. "This is the music, the divine music of my exalted master, my great teacher, Chevalier Gluck."

"You are right; your majesty is a great musician," cried Lord Vaudreuil, in amazement, "the ideal pupil of the genial *maestro*. Yes, this music is Gluck's. It is the overture to his new opera of 'Alcestes,' which he sent me from Venice to submit to your majesty. These tones shall speak for the master, and entreat for him the protection of the queen."

"You have not addressed the queen, but my own heart," said Marie Antoinette, with gentle, deeply-moved voice. "It was a greeting from my home, a greeting from my teacher, who is at the same time the greatest composer of Europe. Oh, I am proud of calling myself his pupil. But Gluck needs no protection; it is much more we who need the protection which he affords us in giving us the works of his genius. I thank you, count," continued Marie Antoinette, turning to Vaudreuil with a pleasant smile. "This is a great pleasure which you have prepared for me. But knowing, as I now do, that this is Gluck's music, I do not dare to play another note; for, to injure a note of his writing, seems to me like treason against the crown. I will practise this piece, and then some day we will play it to the whole court. And now, my honored guests, if it pleases you, we go to meet the king. Gentlemen, let each one choose his lady, for we do not want to go in state procession, but by different paths."

All the gentlemen present rushed toward the queen, each desirous to have the honor of waiting upon her. Marie Antoinette thanked them all with a pleasant smile, and took the arm of the eldest gentleman there, the Baron de Besenval.

"Come, baron," said she, "I know a new path, which none of these gentry have learned, and I am sure that we shall be the first to reach the place where the king is."

Resting on the arm of the baron, she left the saloon, and passed out of the door opposite, upon the little terrace leading to the well-shaded park.

"We will go through the English garden. I have had them open a path through the thicket, which will lead us directly to our goal; while the others will all have to go through the Italian garden, and so make a circuit. But look, my lord, somebody is coming there—who is it?"

And the queen pointed to the tall, slim figure of a man who was just then striding along the terrace.

"Madame," answered the baron, "it is the Duke de Fronac."

"Alas!" murmured Marie Antoinette, "he is coming to lay new burdens upon us, and to put us in the way of meeting more disagreeable things."

"Would it be your wish that I should dismiss him? Do you give me power to tell him that you extend no audience to him here?"

"Oh! do not do so," sighed Marie Antoinette. "He, too, is one of my enemies, and we must proceed much more tenderly with our dear enemies than with our friends."

Just then the Duke de Fronac ascended the last terrace, and approached the queen with repeated bows, which she reciprocated with an earnest look and a gentle inclination of the head.

"Well, duke, is it I with whom the chief manager of the royal theatres wishes to speak?"

"Madame," answered the duke, "I am come to beg an audience of your majesty."

"You have it; and it is, as you see, a very imposing audience, for we stand in the throne-room of God, and the canopy of Heaven arches over us. Now say, duke, what brings you to me?"

"Your majesty, I am come to file an accusation!"

"And of course against me?" asked the queen, with a haughty smile.

The duke pretended not to hear the question, and went on:

"I am come to bring a charge and to claim my rights. His majesty has had the grace to appoint me manager-in-chief of all the royal theatres, and to give me their supreme control."

"Well, what has that to do with me?" asked the queen in her coldest way. "You have then your duties assigned you, to be rightfully fulfilled, and to keep your theatres in order, as if they were troops under your care."

"But, your majesty, there is a theatre which seeks to free itself from my direction. And by virtue of my office and my trust I must stringently urge you that this new theatre royal be delivered into my charge."

"I do not understand you," said the queen, coolly. "Of what new theatre are you speaking, and where is it?"

"Your majesty, it is here in Trianon. Here operettas, comedies, and vaudevilles are played. The stage is furnished as all stages are; it is a permanent stage, and I can therefore ask that it be given over into my charge, for, I repeat it again, theking has appointed me director of all the collective theatres royal."

"But, duke," answered the queen with a somewhat more pliant tone, "you forget one thing, and that is, that the theatre in Trianon does not belong to the theatres of his majesty. It is my stage, and Trianon is my realm. Have you not read on the placards, which are at the entrance of Trianon, that it is the queen who gives laws here? Do you not know that the king has given me this bit of ground that I may enjoy my freedom here, and have a place where the Queen of France may have a will of her own?"

"Your majesty," answered the duke with an expression of the profoundest deference, "I beg your pardon. I did not suppose that there was a place in France where the king is not the lord paramount, and where his commands are not imperative."

"You see, then, that you are mistaken. Here in Trianon I am king, and my commands are binding."

"That does not prevent, your majesty, the commands of the king having equal force," replied the duke, with vehemence. "And even if the Queen of France disowns these laws, yet others do not dare take the risk of following the example of the queen. For they remain, wherever they are, the subjects of the king. So even here in Trianon I am still the obedient subject of his majesty, and his commands and my duties are bound to be respected by me."

"My lord duke," cried the queen with fresh impatience, "you are free never to come to Trianon. I give you my full permission to that end, and thus you will be relieved from the possibility of ever coming into collision with your ever-delicate conscience and the commands of the king."

"But, your majesty, there is a theatre in Trianon!"

"Not this indefinite phrase, duke; there is a theatre in Trianon, but I the queen, the princess of the royal family, and the guests I invite, support a theatre in Trianon. Let me say this once for all: you cannot have the direction where we are the actors. Besides, I have had occasion several times to give you my views respecting Trianon. I have no court here. I live here as a private person. I am here but a land-owner, and the pleasures and enjoyments which I provide here for myself and my friends shall never be supervised by any one but myself alone." *

"Your majesty," said the duke, with a cold smile, "it is no single person that supervises you; it is public opinion, and I think that this will speak on my side."

The duke bowed, and, without waiting for a sign from the queen to withdraw, he turned around and began to descend the terrace.

"He is a shameless man!" muttered the queen, with pale cheeks and flashing eyes, as she followed him with her looks.

"He is ambitious," whispered Besenval; "he implores your majesty in this way, and risks his life and his office, in the hope of being received into the court society."

"No, no," answered Marie Antoinette, eagerly; "there is nothing in me that attracts him. The king's aunts have set him against me, and this is a new way which their tender care has conjured up to irritate me, and make me sick. Yet let us leave this, baron. Let us forget this folly, and only remember that we are in Trianon. See, we are now entering my dear English garden. Oh, look around you, baron, and then tell me is it not beautiful here, and have I not reason to be proud of what I have called here into being?"

While thus speaking, the queen advanced with eager, flying steps to the exquisite beds of flowers which beautifully variegated the surface of the English garden.

It was in very truth the creation of the queen, this English garden, and it formed a striking contrast to the solemn, stately hedges, the straight alleys, the regular flower-beds, the carefully walled pools and brooks, which were habitual in the gardens of Versailles and Trianon. In the English-garden every thing was cosy and natural. The waters foamed here, and there they gathered themselves together and stood still; here and there were plants which grew just where the wind had scattered the seed. Hundreds of the finest trees—willows, American oaks, acacias,

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* The very words of the queen.—See Goncourt, "Histoire de Marie Antoinette," p. 106.

firs—threw their shade abroad, and wrought a rich diversity in the colors of the foliage. The soil here rose into gentle hillocks, and there sank in depressions and natural gorges. All things seemed without order or system, and where art had done its work, there seemed to be the mere hand of free, unfettered Nature.

The farther the queen advanced with her companion into the garden, the more glowing became her countenance, and the more her eyes beamed with their accustomed fire.

"Is it not beautiful here?" asked she, of the baron, who was walking silently by her side.

"It is beautiful wherever your majesty is," answered he, with an almost too tender tone. But the queen did not notice it. Her heart was filled with an artless joy; she listened with suspended breath to the trilling song of the birds, warbling their glad hymns of praise out from the thickets of verdure. How could she have any thought of the idle suggestions of the voice of the baron, who had been chosen as her companion because of his forty-five years, and of his hair being tinged with gray?

"It seems to me, baron," she said, with a charming laugh, while looking at a bird which, its song just ended, soared from the bushes to the heavens—"it seems to me as if Nature wanted to send me a greeting, and deputed this bird to bring it to me. Ah," she went on to say, with quickly clouded brow, "it is really needful that I should at times hear the friendly notes and the sweet melodies of such a genuine welcome. I have suffered a great deal to-day, baron, and the welcome of this bird of Trianon was the balm of many a wound that I have received since yesterday."

"Your majesty was in Paris?" asked Besenval, hesitatingly, and with a searching glance of his cunning, dark eyes, directed to the sad countenance of Marie Antoinette.

"I was in Paris," answered she, with a flush of joy; "and the good Parisians welcomed the wife of the king and the mother of the children of France with a storm of enthusiasm."

"No, madame," replied the baron, reddening, "they welcomed with a storm of enthusiasm the most beautiful lady of France, the adored queen, the mother of all poor and suffering ones."

"And yet there was a dissonant note which mingled with all these jubilee tones," said the queen, thoughtfully. "While all were shouting, there came one voice which sounded to my ear like the song of the bird of misfortune. Believe me, Besenval, every thing is not as it ought to be. There is something in the air which fills me with anxiety and fear. I cannot drive it away; I feel that the sword of Damocles is hanging over my head, and that my hands are too weak to remove it."

"A woe to the traitors who have dared to raise the sword of Damocles over the head of the queen!" cried the baron, furiously.

"Woe to them, but woe to me too!" replied the queen, with gentle sadness. "I have this morning had a stormy interview with Madame Adelaide. It appears that my enemies have concocted a new way of attacking me, and Madame Adelaide was the herald to announce the beginning of the tournament."

"Did she venture to bring any accusations against your majesty?" asked Besenval. The queen replying in the affirmative with a nod, he went on. "But what can they say? Whence do they draw the poisoned arrows to wound the noblest and truest of hearts?"

"They draw them from their jealousy, from their hatred against the house of Austria, from the rage with which they look upon the manner in which the king has bestowed his love. 'What can they say?' They make out of little things monstrous crimes. They let a pebble grow into a great rock, with which they strive to smite me down. Oh, my friend, I have suffered a great deal to-day, and, in order to tell you this, I chose you as my companion. I dare not complain before the king," Marie Antoinette went on, while two tears rolled slowly down her cheeks, "for I will not be the means of opening a breach in the family, and the king would cause them to feel his wrath who have drawn tears from the eyes of his wife. But you are my friend, Besenval, and I confide in your friendship and in your honor. Now, tell me, you who know the world, and who are my senior in experience of life, tell me whether I do wrong to live as I do. Are the king's aunts right in charging it upon me as a crime, that I take part in the simple joys of life, that I take delight in my youth and am happy? Is the Count de Provence right in charging me, as with a crime, that I am the chief counsellor of the king, and that I venture to give him my views regarding political matters? Am I really condemned to stand at an unapproachable distance from the people and the court, like a beautiful statue? Is it denied to me to have feeling, to love and to hate, like everybody else? Is the Queen of France nothing but the sacrificial lamb which the dumb idol etiquette carries in its leaden arms, and crushes by slowly pressing it to itself? Tell me, Besenval; speak to me like an honorable and upright man, and remember that God is above us and hears our words!"

"May God be my witness," said Besenval, solemnly. "Nothing lies nearer my heart than that your majesty hear me. For my life, my happiness, and my misery, all lie wrapped up in the heart of your majesty. No, I answer—no; the aunts of the king, the old princesses, look with the basilisk eye of envy from a false point. They have lived at the court of their father; they have seen Vice put on the trappings of Virtue; they have seen Shamelessness array itself in the garments of Innocence, and they no longer retain their faith in Virtue or Innocence. The purity of the queen appears to them to be a studied coquetry, her unconstrained cheerfulness to be culpable frivolity. No, the Count de Provence is not right in bringing the charge against the king that it is wrong in him to love his wife with the intensity and self-surrender with which a citizen loves the wife whom he has himself selected. He is not right in alleging it as an accusation against you, that you are the counsellor of the king, and that you seek to control political action. Your whole offence lies in the fact that your political views are different from his, and that, through the influence which you have gained over the heart of the king, his aunts are driven into the background. Your majesty is an Austrian, a friend of the Duke de Choiseul. That is your whole offence. Now you would not be less blameworthy in the eyes of these enemies were you to live in exact conformity with the etiquette-books of the Queen of France, covered with the dust of a hundred years. Your majesty would therefore do yourself and the whole court an injury were you to allow your youth, your beauty, and your innocence, to be subjected to these old laws. It were folly to condemn yourself to *ennui* and solitude. Does not the Queen of France enjoy a right which the meanest of her subjects possesses, of collecting her own chosen friends around her and taking her pleasure with them. We live, I know, in an age of reckless acts; but may there not be some recklessness in dealing with the follies of etiquette? They bring it as a charge against your majesty that you adjure the great court circles, and the stiff set with which the royal family of France used to martyr itself. They say that by giving up ceremony you are undermining the respect which the people ought to cherish toward royalty. But would it not be laughable to think that the obedience of the people depends upon the number of the hours which a royal family may spend in the society of tedious and wearisome courtiers? No, my queen, do not listen to the hiss of the hostile serpents which surround you. Go, courageously, your own way—the way of innocence, guilelessness, and love."

"I thank you—oh, I thank you!" cried Marie Antoinette. "You have lifted heavy doubts from my heart and strengthened my courage. I thank you!"

And, with beaming eyes and a sweet smile, she extended both her hands to the baron.

He pressed them tightly within his own, and, sinking upon his knee, drew the royal hands with a glow to his lips.

"Oh, my queen, my mistress!" he cried, passionately, "behold at your feet your most faithful servant, your most devoted slave. Receive from me the oath of my eternal devotion and love. You have honored me with your confidence, you have called me your friend. But my soul and my heart glow for another name. Speak the word, Marie Antoinette, the word—"

The queen drew back, and the paleness of death spread over her cheeks. She had at the outset listened with amazement, then with horror and indignation, to the insolent words of the baron, and gradually her gentle features assumed a fierce and disdainful expression.

"My lord," she said, with the noble dignity of a queen, "I told you before that God is above us, and hears our words. You have spoken, wantonly, and God has heard you. To Him I leave the punishment of your wantonness. Stand up, my lord! the king shall know nothing of an insult which would have brought you into ignominy with him forever. But if you ever, by a glance or a gesture, recall this both wanton and ridiculous scene, the king shall hear all from me!"

And while the queen pointed, with a proud and dignified gesture, to the place which was their goal, she said, with commanding tone:

"Go before, my lord; I will follow you alone."

The Baron de Besenval, the experienced courtier, the practised man of the world, was undergoing what was new to him; he felt himself perplexed, ashamed, and no longer master of his words. He had risen from his knees, and, after making a stiff obeisance to the queen, he turned and went with a swift step and crestfallen look along the path which the queen had indicated.

Marie Antoinette followed him with her eyes so long as he remained in sight, then looked with a long, sad glance around her.

"And so I am alone again," she whispered, "and poorer by one illusion more. Ah, and is it then true that there is no friendship for me; must every friend be an envier or else a lover? Even this man, whom I honored with my confidence, toward whom I cherished the feeling of a pupil toward a teacher, even this man has dared to insult me! Ah, must my heart encounter a new wonder every day, and must my happiness be purchased with so many pains?"

And with a deep cry of pain the queen drew her hands to her face, and wept bitterly. All around was still. Only here and there were heard the songs of the birds in the bushes, light and dreamy; while the trees, swayed by the wind, gently whispered, as if they wanted to quiet the grief of the queen, and dry up those tears which fell upon the flowers.

All at once, after a short pause, the queen let her hands fall again, and raised her head with proud and defiant energy.

"Away with tears!" she said. "What would my friends say were they to see me? What buzzing and whispering would there be, were they to see that the gentle queen, the always happy and careless Marie Antoinette, had shed tears? Oh, my God!" she cried, raising her large eyes to heaven, "I have to-day paid interest enough for my happiness; preserve for me at least the capital, and I will cheerfully pay the world the highest rates, such as only a miserly usurer can desire."

And with a proud spirit, and a lofty carriage, the queen strode forward along the path. The bushes began to let the light through, and the queen emerged from the English garden into the small plain, in whose midst Marie Antoinette had erected her Arcadia, her dream of paradise. The queen stood still, and with a countenance which quickly kindled with joy, and with eyes which beamed with pleasure, looked at the lovely view which had been called into being by the skill of her architect, Hubert Robert.

And the queen might well rejoice in this creation, this poetic idyl, which arose out of the splendor of palaces like a violet in the sand, and among the variegated tropical flowers which adorn the table of a king. Closely adjoining each other were little houses like those in which peasants live, the peasant-women being the proud ladies of the royal court. A little brook babbled behind the houses, and turned with its foaming torrent the white wheel of the mill which was at the extremity of the village. Near the mill, farther on, stood entirely alone a little peasant's house, especially tasteful and elegant. It was surrounded by flower-beds, vineyards, and laurel-paths. The roof was covered with straw; the little panes were held by leads to the sashes. It was the home of Marie Antoinette. The queen herself made the drawings, and wrought out the plan. It was her choice that it should be small, simple, and modest; that it should have not the slightest appearance of newness, and that rents and fissures should be represented on the wall by artificial contrivances, so as to give the house an old look, and an appearance of having been injured. She had little thought how speedily time could demolish the simple pastimes of a queen. Close by stood a still smaller house, known as the milk-room. It was close to the brook. And when Marie Antoinette, with her peasant-women, had milked the cows, they bore the milk through the village in white buckets, with silver handles, to the milk-room, where it was poured out into pretty, white pans standing on tables of white marble. On the other side of the road was the house of the chief-magistrate of the village, and close by lived the schoolmaster.

Marie Antoinette had had a care for everything. There were bins to preserve the new crops in, and before the hay-scaffoldings were ladders leading up to the fragrant hay.

"Ah, the world is beautiful," said Marie Antoinette, surveying her creation with a cheerful look. "I will enjoy the pleasant hours, and be happy here."

She walked rapidly forward, casting friendly glances up to the houses to see whether the peasants had not hid themselves within, and were waiting for her. But all was still, and not one of the inhabitants peeped out from a single window.

All at once the stillness was broken by a loud clattering sound. The white wheel of the mill began to turn, and at the door appeared the corpulent form of the miller in his white garments, with his smiling, meal-powdered face, and with the white cap upon his head.

The queen uttered an exclamation of delight, and ran with quick steps toward the mill. But before she could reach it, the door of the official's house opposite opened, and the mayor, in his black costume, and with the broad white ribbon around his neck; the Spanish cane, with a gold knob, in his hand, and wearing his black, three-cornered hat, issued from the dwelling. He advanced directly to Marie Antoinette, and resting his hands upon his sides and assuming a threatening mien, placed himself in front of her.

"We are very much dissatisfied with you, for you neglect your duties of hospitality in a most unbecoming manner. We must have you give your testimony why you have come so late, for the flowers are all hanging their heads, the nightingales will not sing any more, and the lambs in the meadow will not touch the sweetest grass. Every thing is parching and dying because you are not here, and with desire to see you."

"That is not true," cried another merry voice; the window of the school-house opened with a rattle, and the jolly young schoolmaster looked out and threatened with his rod the grave mayor.

"How can you say, sir, that every thing is going to ruin? Am I not here to keep the whole together? Since the unwise people stopped learning, I have become the schoolmaster of the dear kine, and am giving them lessons in the art of making life agreeable. I am the dancing-master of the goats, and have opened a ballet-school for the kids."

Marie Antoinette laughed aloud. "Mister schoolmaster," said she, "I am very desirous to have a taste of your skill, and I desire you to give a ballet display this afternoon upon the great meadow. So far as you are concerned, Mr. Mayor," she said, with a laughing nod, "I desire you to exercise a little forbearance, and to pardon some things in me for my youth's sake."

"As if my dear sister-in-law now needed any looking after!" cried the mayor, with an emphatic tone.

"Ah, my Lord de Provence," said the queen, smiling, "you are falling out of your part, and forgetting two things. The first, that I am not the queen here; and the second, that here in Trianon all flatteries are forbidden."

"It lies in you, whether the truth should appear as flattery," answered the Count de Provence, slightly bowing.

"That is an answer worthy of a scholar," cried the schoolmaster, Count d'Artois. "Brother, you do not know the A B C of gallantry. You must go to school to me."

"I do not doubt, brother Charles, that in this thing I could learn very much of you," said the Count de Provence, smiling. "Meanwhile, I am not sure that my wife would be satisfied with the instruction."

"Some time we will ask her about it," said the queen. "Good-by, my brothers, I must first greet my dear miller."

She rushed forward, sprang with a flying step up the little wooden stairway, and threw both her arms around the neck of the miller, who, laughingly, pressed her to his heart, and drew her within the mill.

"I thank you, Louis!" cried the queen, bending forward and pressing the hand of her husband to her lips. "What a pleasant surprise you have prepared for me; and how good it is in you to meet me here in my pleasant plantation!"

"Did you not say but lately that you wanted this masquerade?" asked the king, with a pleasant smile. "Did not you yourself assign the parts, and appoint me to be the miller, the Count de Provence to be mayor, and the whimsical Artois to be schoolmaster *de par la reine*, as it runs here in Trianon, and do you wonder now that we, as it becomes the obedient, follow our queen's commands, and undertake the charge which she intrusts to us?"

"Oh, Louis, how good you are!" said the queen, with tears in her eyes. "I know indeed how little pleasure you, so far as you yourself are concerned, find in these foolish sports and idle acts, and yet you sacrifice your own wishes and take part in our games."

"That is because I love you!" said the king with simplicity, and a smile of pleasure beautified his broad, good-natured face. "Yes, Marie, I love you tenderly, and it gives me joy to contribute to your happiness."

The queen gently laid her arm around Louis's neck, and let her head fall upon his shoulder. "Do you still know, Louis," asked she, "do you still know what you said to me when you gave Trianon to me?"

"Well," said the king, shaking his head slowly.

"You said to me, 'You love flowers. I will present to you a whole bouquet. I give you Little Trianon.' * My dear sire! you have given me not only a bouquet of flowers, but a bouquet of pleasant hours, of happy years, for which I thank you, and you alone."

"And may this bouquet never wither, Marie!" said the king, laying his hand as if in blessing on the head of his wife, and raising his good, blue eyes with a pious and prayerful look. "But, my good woman," said he then, after a little pause, "you quite let me forget the part I have to play, and the mill-wheel is standing still again, since the miller is not there. It is, besides, in wretched order, and it is full needful that I practise my art of blacksmith here a little, and put better screws and springs in the machine. But listen! what kind of song is that without?"

"Those are the peasants greeting us with their singing," said the queen, smiling. "Come, Mr. Miller, let us show ourselves to them."

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* The very words of the king.—See "Mémoire de Marquis de Crequy," vol. iv.

She drew the king out upon the small staircase. Directly at the foot of it stood the king's two brothers, the Counts de Provence and Artois, as chief official and schoolmaster, and behind them the duchesses and princesses, dukes and counts, arrayed as peasants. In united chorus they greeted the mistress and the miller:

"Où peut-on être mieux,
Qu'au sein de sa famille?"

The queen smiled, and yet tears glittered in her eyes, tears of joy.

Those were happy hours which the royal pair spent that day in Trianon—hours of such bright sunshine that Marie Antoinette quite forgot the sad clouds of the morning, and gave herself undisturbed to the enjoyment of this simple, country life. They sat down to a country dinner—a slight, simple repast, brought together from the resources of the hen-coop, the mill, and the milk-room. Then the whole company went out to lie down in the luxuriant grass which grew on the border of the little grove, and looked at the cows grazing before them on the meadow, and with stately dignity pursuing the serious occupation of chewing the cud. But as peasants have something else to do than to live and enjoy, their mistress, Marie Antoinette, soon left her resting-place to set her people a good example in working. The spinning-wheel was brought and set upon a low stool; Marie Antoinette began to spin. How quickly the wheel began to turn, as if it were the wheel of fortune—to-day bringing joy, and to-morrow calamity!

The evening has not yet come, and the wheel of fortune is yet turning, yet calamity is there.

Marie Antoinette does not yet know it; her eye still beams with joy, a happy smile still plays upon her rosy lips. She is sitting now with her company by the lake, with the hook in her hand, and looking with laughing face and fixed attention at the rod, and crying aloud as often as she catches a fish. For these fishes are to serve as supper for the company, and the queen has ceremoniously invited her husband to an evening meal, which she herself will serve and prepare. The queen smiles still and is happy; her spinning-wheel is silent, but the wheel of fate is moving still.

The king is no longer there. He has withdrawn into the mill to rest himself.

And yet there he is not alone. Who ventures to disturb him? It must be something very serious. For it is well known that the king very seldom goes to Trianon, and that when he is there he wishes to be entirely free from business.

And yet he is disturbed to-day; yet the premier, Baron de Breteuil, is come to seek the miller of Little Trianon, and to beseech him even there to be the king again.

CHAPTER IV.

THE QUEEN'S NECKLACE.

DIRECTLY after a page, arrayed in the attire of a miller's boy, had announced the Baron de Breteuil, the king withdrew into his chamber and resumed his own proper clothing. He drew on the long, gray coat, the short trousers of black velvet, the long, gold-embroidered waistcoat of gray satin; and over this the bright, thin ribbon of the Order of Louis—the attire in which the king was accustomed to present himself on gala-days.

With troubled, disturbed countenance, he then entered the little apartment where his chief minister, the Baron de Breteuil, was awaiting him.

"Tell me quickly," ejaculated the king, "do you bring bad news? Has any thing unexpected occurred?"

"Sire," answered the minister, respectfully, "something unexpected at all events, but whether something bad will be learned after further investigation."

"Investigation!" cried the king. "Then do you speak of a crime?"

"Yes, sire, of a crime—the crime of a base deception, and, as it seems, of a defalcation involving immense sums and objects of great value."

"Ah," said the king, with a sigh of relief, "then the trouble is only one of money."

"No, sire, it is one which concerns the honor of the queen."

Louis arose, while a burning flush of indignation passed over his face.

"Will they venture again to assail the honor of the queen?" he asked.

"Yes, sire," answered Breteuil, with his invincible calmness—"yes, sire, they will venture to do so. And at this time it is so infernal and deeply-laid a plan that it will be difficult to get at the truth. Will your majesty allow me to unfold the details of the matter somewhat fully?"

"Speak, baron, speak," said the king, eagerly, taking his seat upon a wooden stool, and motioning to the minister to do the same.

"Sire," answered the premier, with a bow, "I will venture to sit, because I am in fact a little exhausted with my quick run hither."

"And is the matter so pressing?" muttered the king, drawing out his tobacco-box, and in his impatience rolling it between his fingers.

"Yes, very pressing," answered Breteuil, taking his seat. "Does your majesty remember the beautiful necklace which the court jeweller, Böhmer, some time since had the honor to offer to your majesty?"

"Certainly, I remember it," answered the king, quickly nodding. "The queen showed herself on that occasion just as unselfish and magnanimous as she always is. It was told me that her majesty had very much admired the necklace which Böhmer had showed to her, and yet had declined to purchase it, because it seemed to her too dear. I wanted to buy it and have the pleasure of offering it to the queen, but she decisively refused it."

"We well remember the beautiful answer which her majesty gave to her husband," said Breteuil, gently bowing. "All Paris repeated with delight the words which her majesty uttered: 'Sir, we have more diamonds than ships. Buy a ship with this money!'" *

"You have a good memory," said the king, "for it is five years since this happened. Böhmer has twice made the attempt since then to sell this costly necklace to me, but I have dismissed him, and at last forbidden him to allude to the matter again."

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* "Correspondance Secrète de la Cour de Louis XVI."

"I believe that he has, meanwhile, ventured to trouble the queen several times about the necklace. It appears that he had almost persuaded himself that your majesty would purchase it. Years ago he caused stones to be selected through all Europe, wishing to make a necklace of diamonds which should be alike large, heavy, and brilliant. The queen refusing to give him his price of two million francs, he offered it at last for one million eight hundred thousand."

"I have heard of that," said the king. "Her majesty was at last weary of the trouble, and gave command that the court jeweller, Böhmer, should not be admitted."

"Every time, therefore, that he came to Versailles he was refused admittance. He then had recourse to writing, and two weeks ago her majesty received from him a begging letter, in which he said that he should be very happy if, through his instrumentality, the queen could possess the finest diamonds in Europe, and imploring her majesty not to forget her court jeweller. The queen read this letter, laughing, to her lady-in-waiting, Madame de Campan, and said it seemed as if the necklace had deprived the good Böhmer of his reason. But not wishing to pay any further attention to his letter or to answer it, she burned the paper in a candle which was accidentally standing on her table."

"Good Heaven! How do you know these details?" asked the king, in amazement.

"Sire, I have learned them from Madame de Campan herself, as I was compelled to speak with her about the necklace."

"But what is it about this necklace? What has the queen to do with that?" asked the king, wiping with a lace handkerchief the sweat which stood in great drops upon his lofty forehead.

"Sire, the court jeweller, Böhmer, asserts that he sold the necklace of brilliants to the queen, and now desires to be paid."

"The queen is right," exclaimed the king, "the man is out of his head. If he did sell the necklace to the queen, there must have been witnesses present to confirm it, and the keepers of her majesty's purse would certainly know about it."

"Sire, Böhmer asserts that the queen caused it to be bought of him in secret, through a third hand, and that this confidential messenger was empowered to pay down thirty thousand francs, and to promise two hundred thousand more."

"What is the name of this confidential messenger? What do they call him?"

"Sire," answered the Baron de Breteuil, solemnly—"sire, it is the cardinal and grand almoner of your majesty, Prince Louis de Rohan."

The king uttered a loud cry, and sprang quickly from his seat.

"Rohan?" asked he. "And do they dare to bring this man whom the queen hates, whom she scorns, into relations with her? Ha, Breteuil! you can go; the story is too foolishly put together for any one to believe it."

"Your majesty, Böhmer has, in the mean while, believed it, and has delivered the necklace to the cardinal, and received the queen's promise to pay, written with her own hand."

"Who says that? How do you know all the details?"

"Sire, I know it by a paper of Böhmer's, who wrote to me after trying in vain several times to see me. The letter was a tolerably confused one, and I did not understand it. But as he stated in it that the queen's lady-in-waiting advised him to apply to me as the minister of the royal house, I considered it best to speak with Madame de Campan. What I learned of her is so important that I begged her to accompany me to Trianon, and to repeat her statement before your majesty."

"Is Campan then in Trianon?" asked the king.

"Yes, sire; and on our arrival we learned that Böhmer had just been there, and was most anxious to speak to the queen. He had been denied admission as always, and had gone away weeping and scolding."

"Come," said the king, "let us go to Trianon; I want to speak with Campan."

And with quick, rapid steps the king, followed by the minister Breteuil, left the mill, and shunning the main road in order not to be seen by the queen, struck into the little side-path that led thither behind the houses.

"Campan," said the king, hastily entering the little toilet-room of the queen, where the lady-in-waiting was—"Campan, the minister has just been telling me a singular and incredible history. Yet repeat to me your last conversation with Böhmer."

"Sire," replied Madame de Campan, bowing low, "does your majesty command that I speak before the queen knows of the matter?"

"Ah," said the king, turning to the minister, "you see I am right. The queen knows nothing of this, else she would certainly have spoken to me about it. Thank God, the queen withholds no secrets from me! I thank you for your question, Campan. It is better that the queen be present at our interview. I will send for her to come here." And the king hastened to the door, opened it, and called, "Are any of the queen's servants here?"

The voice of the king was so loud and violent that the chamberlain, Weber, who was in the little outer antechamber, heard it, and at once rushed in.

"Weber," cried the king to him, "hasten at once to Little Trianon. Beg the queen, in my name, to have the goodness to come to the palace within a quarter of an hour, to consult about a weighty matter that allows no delay. But take care that the queen be not alarmed, and that she do not suspect that sad news has come regarding her family. Hasten, Weber! And now, baron," continued the king, closing the door, "now you shall be convinced by your own eyes and ears that the queen will be as amazed and as little acquainted with all these things as I myself. I wish, therefore, that you would be present at the interview which I shall have with my wife and Campan, without the queen's knowing that you are near. You will be convinced at once in this way of the impudent and shameless deception that they have dared to play. Where does that door lead to, Campan?" asked the king, pointing to the white, gold-bordered door, at whose side two curtains of white satin, wrought with roses, were secured.

"Sire, it leads to the small reception-room."

"Will the queen pass that way when she comes?"

"No, your majesty, she is accustomed to take the same way which your majesty took, through the antechamber."

"Good. Then, baron, go into the little saloon. Leave the door open, and do you, Campan, loosen the curtains and let them fall over the door, that the minister may hear without being seen."

A quarter of an hour had scarcely elapsed when the queen entered the toilet-chamber, with glowing cheeks, and under visible excitement. The king went hastily to her, took her hand and pressed it to his lips.

"Forgiveness, Marie, that I have disturbed you in the midst of your pleasures."

"Tell me, quickly," cried the queen, impatiently. "What is it? Is it a great misfortune?"

"No, Marie, but a great annoyance, which is so far a misfortune in that the name of your majesty is involved in a disagreeable and absurd plot. The court jeweller, Böhmer, asserts that he has sold a necklace to your majesty for one million eight hundred thousand francs."

"But the man is crazy," cried the queen. "Is that all your majesty had to say to me?"

"I beg that Campan will repeat the conversation which she had yesterday with Böhmer."

And the king beckoned with his hand to the lady-in-waiting, who, at the entrance of the queen, had modestly taken her seat at the back part of the room.

"How!" cried the queen, amazed, now first perceiving Campan. "What do you here? What does all this mean?"

"Your majesty, I came to Trianon to inform you about the conversation which I had yesterday with Böhmer. When I arrived I found he had just been here."

"And what did he want?" cried the queen. "Did you not tell me, Campan, that he no longer possesses this unfortunate necklace, with which he has been making a martyr of me for years? Did you not tell me that he had sold it to the Grand Sultan, to go to Constantinople?"

"I repeated to your majesty what Böhmer said to me. Meanwhile I beg now your gracious permission to repeat my to-day's interview with Böhmer. Directly after your majesty had gone to Trianon with the Duchess de Polignac, the court jeweller Böhmer was announced. He came with visible disquiet and perplexity, and asked me whether your majesty had left no commission for him. I answered him that the queen had not done so, that in one word she had no commission for him, and that she was tired of his eternal pestering. 'But,' said Böhmer, 'I must have an answer to the letter that I sent to her, and to whom must I apply?' 'To nobody,' I answered. 'Her majesty has burned your letter without reading it.' 'Ah! madame,' cried he, 'that is impossible. The queen knows that she owes me money.'"

"I owe him money!" cried the queen, horrified. "How can the miserable man dare to assert such a thing?"

"That I said to him, your majesty, but he answered, with complete self-possession, that your majesty owed him a million and some five hundred thousand francs, and when I asked him in complete amazement for what articles your majesty owed him such a monstrous sum, he answered, 'For my necklace.'"

"This miserable necklace again!" exclaimed the queen. "It seems as if the man made it only to make a martyr of me with it. Year after year I hear perpetually about this necklace, and it has been quite in vain that, with all my care and good-will, I have sought o drive from him this fixed idea that I must buy it. He is so far gone in his illusion as to assert that I have bought it."

"Madame, this man is not insane," said the king, seriously. "Listen further. Go on, Campan."

"I laughed," continued Madame de Campan, "and asked him how he could assert such a thing, when he told me only a few months ago that he had sold the necklace to the Sultan. Then he replied that the queen had ordered him to give this answer to every one that asked about the necklace. Then he told me further, that your majesty had secretly bought the necklace, and through the instrumentality of the Lord Cardinal de Rohan."

"Through Rohan?" cried the queen, rising. "Through the man whom I hate and despise? And is there a man in France who can believe this, and who does not know that the cardinal is the one who stands the lowest in my favor!"

"I said to Mr. Böhmer—I said to him that he was deceived, that the queen would never make a confidant of Cardinal Rohan, and he made me this very answer: 'You deceive yourself, madame. The cardinal stands so high in favor, and maintains such confidential relations with her majesty, that she had sent, through his hands, thirty thousand francs as a first payment. The queen took this money in the presence of the cardinal, from the little secretary of Sèvres porcelain, which stands near to the chimney in her boudoir.' 'And did the cardinal really say that?' I asked; and when he reaffirmed it, I told him that he was deceived. He now began to be very much troubled, and said,'Good Heaven! what if you are right, what if I am deceived! There has already a suspicion come to me; the cardinal promised me that on Whitsunday the queen would wear the collar, and she did not do so; so this determined me to write to her.' When now, full of anxiety, he asked what advice I could give him, I at once bade him go to Lord Breteuil and tell him all. He promised to do so, and went. But I hastened to come hither to tell your majesty the whole story, but when I arrived I found the unhappy jeweller already here, and he only went away after I gave him my promise to speak to-day with your majesty."

The queen had at the outset listened with speechless amazement, and as Campan approached the close of her communication, her eyes opened wider and wider. She had stood as rigid as a statue. But now all at once life and animation took possession of this statue; a glowing purple-red diffused itself over her cheeks, and directing her eyes, which blazed with wonderful fire, to the king, she said, with a loud and commanding voice, "Sire, you have heard this story. Your wife is accused, and the queen is even charged with having a secret understanding with Cardinal Rohan. I desire an investigation—a rigid, strict investigation. Call at once, Lord Breteuil, that we may take counsel with him. But I insist upon having this done."

"And your will is law, madame," said the king, directing an affectionate glance at the excited face of the queen. "Come out, Breteuil!"

And as between the curtains appeared the serious, sad face of the minister, the king turned to his wife and said: "I wished that he might be a secret witness of this interview, and survey the position which you should take in this matter."

"Oh, sire!" exclaimed Marie Antoinette, extending her hand to him, "so you did not for an instant doubt my innocence?"

"No, truly, not a moment," answered the king, with a smile. "But now come, madame, we will consider with Breteuil what is to be done, and then we will summon the Abbé de Viermont, that he may take part in our deliberations."

On the next day, the 15th of August, a brilliant, select company was assembled in the saloons of Versailles. It was a great holiday, Ascension-day, and the king and the queen, with the entire court, intended to be present at the mass, which the cardinal and the grand almoner would celebrate in the chapel.

The entire brilliant court was assembled; the cardinal arrayed in his suitable apparel, and wearing all the tokens of his rank, had entered the great reception-room, and only awaited the arrival of the royal pair, to lead them into the church. The fine and much-admired face of the cardinal wore to-day a beaming expression, and his great black eyes were continually directed, while he was talking with the Duke de Conti and the Count d'Artois, toward the door through which the royal couple would enter. All at once the portal opened, a royal page stepped in and glanced searchingly around; and seeing the towering figure of the cardinal in the middle of the hall, he at once advanced through the glittering company, and approached the cardinal. "Monseigneur," he whispered to him, "his majesty is awaiting your eminence's immediate appearance in the cabinet."

The cardinal broke off abruptly his conversation with Lord Conti, hurried through the hall and entered the cabinet.

No one was there except the king and queen, and in the background of the apartment, in the recess formed by a window, the premier, Baron Breteuil, the old and irreconcilable enemy of the proud cardinal, who in this hour would have his reward for his year-long and ignominious treatment of the prince.

The cardinal had entered with a confident, dignified bearing; but the cold look of the king and the flaming eye of the queen appeared to confuse him a little, and his proud eye sank to the ground.

"You have been buying diamonds of Böhmer?" asked the king, brusquely.

"Yes, sire," answered the cardinal.

"What have you done with them? Answer me, I command you."

"Sire," said the cardinal, after a pause, "I supposed that they were given to the queen."

"Who intrusted you with this commission?"

"Sire, a lady named Countess Lamotte-Valois. She gave me a letter from her majesty, and I believed that I should be doing the queen a favor if I should undertake the care of the commission which the queen had the grace to intrust to me."

"I!" cried the queen, with an expression of intense scorn, "should I intrust you with a commission in my behalf? I, who for eight years have never deigned to bestow a word upon you? And I should employ such a person as you, a beggar of places?"

"I see plainly," cried the cardinal, "I see plainly that some one has deceived you grievously about me. I will pay for the necklace. The earnest wish to please your majesty has blinded your eyes regarding me. I have planned no deception, and am now bitterly undeceived. But I will pay for the necklace."

"And you suppose that that ends all!" said the queen, with a burst of anger. "You think that, with a pitiful paying for the brilliants, you can atone for the disgrace which you have brought upon your queen? No, no, sir; I desire a rigid investigation. I insist upon it that all who have taken part in this ignominious deception be brought to a relentless investigation. Give me the proofs that you have been deceived, and that you are not much rather the deceiver."

"Ah, madame," cried the cardinal, with a look at once so full of reproach and confidence, that the queen fairly shook with anger. "Here are the proofs of my innocence," continued he, drawing a small portfolio from his pocket, and taking from it a folded paper. "There is the letter of the queen to the Countess Lamotte, in which her majesty empowered me to purchase the diamonds."

The king took the paper, looked over it hastily, read the signature, and gave it, with a suspicious shrug of the shoulders, to his wife.

The queen seized the letter with the wild fury of a tigress, which has at last found its prey, and with breathless haste ran over the paper. Then she broke out into loud, scornful laughter, and, pointing to the letter, she looked at the cardinal with glances of flame.

"That is not my handwriting—that is not my signature!" cried she, furiously. "How are you, sir, a prince and grand almoner of France—how are you so ignorant, so foolish, as to believe that I could subscribe myself 'Marie Antoinette of France?' Everybody knows that queens write only their baptismal names as signatures, and you alone have not known that?"

"I see into it," muttered the cardinal, pale under the look of the queen, and so weak that he had to rest upon the table for support, "I see into it; I have been dreadfully deceived."

The king took a paper from his table and gave it to the cardinal. "Do you confess that you wrote this letter to Böhmer, in which you send him thirty thousand francs in behalf of the queen, in part payment for the necklace?"

"Yes, sire, I confess it," answered the cardinal, with a low voice, which seemed to contradict what he uttered.

"He confesses it," cried the queen, gnashing her teeth, and making up her little hand into a clinched fist. "He has held me fit for such infamy—me, his queen!"

"You assert that you bought the jewels for the queen. Did you deliver them in person?"

"No, sire, the Countess Lamotte did that."

"In your name, cardinal?"

"Yes, in my name, sire, and she gave at the same time a receipt to the queen for one hundred and fifty thousand francs, which I lent the queen toward the purchase."

"And what reward did you have from the queen?"

The cardinal hesitated; then, as he felt the angry, cold, and contemning look of the queen resting upon him, the red blood mounted into his face, and with a withering glance at Marie Antoinette, he said:

"You wish, madame, that I should speak the whole truth! Sire, the queen rewarded me for this little work of love in a manner worthy of a queen. She granted me an appointment in the park of Versailles."

At this new and fearful charge, the queen cried aloud, and, springing forward like a tigress, she seized the arm of her husband and shook it.

"Sire," said she, "listen to this high traitor, bringing infamy upon a queen! Will you bear it? Can his purple protect the villain?"

"No, it cannot, and it shall not!" cried the king. "Breteuil, do your duty. And you, cardinal, who venture to accuse your queen, to scandalize the good name of the wife of your king, go."

"Sire," stammered the cardinal, "sire, I—"

"Not a word," interrupted the king, raising his hand and pointing toward the door, "out, I say, out with you!"

The cardinal staggered to the door, and entered the hall filled with a glittering throng, who were still whispering, laughing, and walking to and fro.

But hardly had he advanced a few steps, when behind him, upon the threshold of the royal cabinet, appeared the minister Breteuil.

"Lieutenant," cried Breteuil, with a loud voice, turning to the officer in command of the guard, "lieutenant, in the name of the king, arrest the Cardinal de Rohan, and take him under escort to the Bastile."

A general cry of horror followed these words, which rolled like a crashing thunder-clap through the careless, coquetting, and unsuspecting company. Then followed a breathless silence.

All eyes were directed to the cardinal, who, pale as death, and yet maintaining his noble carriage, walked along at ease.

At this point a young officer, pale like the cardinal, like all in fact, approached the great ecclesiastic, and gently took his arm.

"Cardinal," said he, with sorrowful tone, "in the name of the king, I arrest your eminence. I am ordered, monseigneur, to conduct you to the Bastile."

"Come, then, my son," answered the cardinal, quickly, making his way slowly through the throng, which respectfully opened to let him pass—"come, since the king commands it, let us go to the Bastile."

He passed on to the door. But when the officer had opened it, he turned round once more to the hall. Standing erect, with all the exalted dignity of his station and his person, he gave the amazed company his blessing.

Then the door closed behind him, and with pale faces the lords and ladies of the court dispersed to convey the horrible tidings to Versailles and Paris, that the king had caused the cardinal, the grand almoner of France, to be arrested in his official robes, and that it was the will of the queen.

And the farther the tidings rolled the more the report enlarged, like an avalanche of calumnies.

In the evening, Marat thundered in his club: "Woe, woe to the Austrian! She borrowed money of the Cardinal de Rohan to buy jewels for herself—jewels while the people hungered. Now, when the cardinal wants his money, the queen denies having received the money, and lets the head of the Church be dragged to the Bastile. Woe, woe to the Austrian!"

"Woe, woe to the Austrian!" muttered brother Simon, who sat near the platform on which Marat was. "We shall not forget it that she buys her jewels for millions of francs, while we have not a sou to buy bread with. Woe to the Austrian!"

And all the men of the club raised their fists and muttered with him, "Woe to the Austrian!"

CHAPTER V.

ENEMIES AND FRIENDS.

All Paris was in an uproar and in motion in all the streets; the people assembled in immense masses at all the squares, and listened with abated breath to the speakers who had taken their stand amid the groups, and who were confirming the astonished hearers respecting the great news of the day.

"The Lord Cardinal de Rohan, the grand almoner of the king," cried a Franciscan monk, who had taken his station upon a curbstone, at the corner of the Tuileries and the great Place de Carrousel—"Cardinal de Rohan has in a despotic manner been deprived of his rights and his freedom. As a dignitary of the Church, he is not under the ordinary jurisdiction, and only the Pope is the rightful lord of a cardinal; only before the Holy Father can an accusation be brought against a servant of the Church. For it has been the law of the Church for centuries that it alone has the power to punish and accuse its servants, and no one has ever attempted to challenge that power. But do you know what has taken place? Cardinal de Rohan has been withdrawn from the jurisdiction of his rightful judges; he has been denied an ecclesiastical tribunal, and he is to be tried before Parliament as if he were an ordinary servant of the king; secular judges are going to sit in judgment upon this great church dignitary, and to charge him with a crime, when no crime has been committed! For what has he done, the grand almoner of France, cardinal, and cousin of the king? A lady, whom he believed to be in the queen's confidence, had told him that the queen wanted to procure a set of jewels, which she was unfortunately not able to buy, because her coffers, as a natural result of her well-known extravagance, were empty. The lady indicated to the lord cardinal that the queen would be delighted if he would advance a sum sufficient to buy the jewels with, and in his name she would cause the costly fabric to be purchased. The cardinal, all the while a devoted and true servant of the king, hastened to gratify the desire of the queen. He took this course with wise precaution, in order that the queen, whose violence is well known, should not apply to any other member of the court, and still further compromise the royal honor. And say yourselves, my noble friends, was it not much better that it should be the lord cardinal who should lend money to the queen, than Lord Lauzun, Count Coigny, or the musical Count Vaudreuil, the special favorite of the queen? Was it not better for him to make this sacrifice and do the queen this great favor?"

"Certainly it was better," cried the mob. "The lord cardinal is a noble man. Long live Cardinal de Rohan!"

"Perish the Austrian, perish the jewelled queen!" cried the cobbler Simon, who was standing amid the crowd, and a hundred voices muttered after him, "Perish the Austrian!"

"Listen, my dear people of Paris, you good-natured lambs, whose wool is plucked off that the Austrian woman may have a softer bed," cried a shrieking voice; "hear what has occurred to-day. I can tell you accurately, for I have just come from Parliament, and a good friend of mine has copied for me the address with which the king is going to open the session to-day."

"Read it to us," cried the crowd. "Keep quiet there—keep still there! We want to hear the address. Read it to us."

"I will do it gladly, but you will not be able to understand me," shrieked the voice. "I am only little in comparison with you, as every one is little who opposes himself to the highest majesty of the earth, the people."

"Hear that," cried one of those who stood nearest to those a little farther away—"hear that, he calls us majesties! He seems to be an excellent gentleman, and he does not look down upon us."

"Did you ever hear of a wise man looking down upon the prince royal, who is young, fair, and strong?" asked the barking voice.

"He is right, we cannot understand him," cried those who stood farthest away, pressing forward. "What did he say? He must repeat his words. Lift him up so that we all may hear him."

A broad-shouldered, gigantic citizen, in good clothing, and with an open, spirited countenance, and a bold, defiant bearing, pressed through the crowd to the neighborhood of the speaker.

"Come, little man," cried he, "I will raise you up on my shoulder, and—but see, it is our friend Marat, the little man, but the great doctor!"

"And you truly, you are my friend Santerre, the great man and the greatest of doctors. For the beer which you get from his brewery is a better medicine for the people than all my electuaries can be. And you, my worthy friend of the hop-pole, will you condescend to take the ugly monkey Marat on your shoulders, that he may tell the people the great news of the day?"

Instead of answering, the brewer Santerre seized the little crooked man by both arms, swung him up with giant strength, and set him on his shoulders.

The people, delighted with the dexterity and strength of the herculean man, broke into a loud cheer, and applauded the brewer, whom all knew, and who was a popular personage in the city. But Marat, too, the horse-doctor of the Count d'Artois, as he called himself derisively, the doctor of poverty and misfortune, as his flatterers termed him—Marat, too, was known to many in the throng, and after Santerre had been applauded, they saluted Marat with a loud *vivat*, and with boisterous clapping of hands.

He turned his distorted, ugly visage toward the Tuileries, whose massive proportions towered up above the lofty trees of the gardens, and with a threatening gesture shook his fist at the royal palace.

"Have you heard it, you proud gods of the earth? Have you heard the sacred thunder mutterings of majesty? Are you not startled from the sleep of your vice, and compelled to fall upon your knees and pray, as poor sinners do before their judgment? But no. You do not see and you do not hear. Your ears are deaf and your hearts are sealed! Behind the lofty walls of Versailles, which a most vicious king erected for his *menus plaisirs*, there you indulge in your lusts, and shut out the voice of truth, which would speak to you here in Paris from the hallowed lips of the people."

"Long live Marat!" cried the cobbler Simon, who, drawn by the shouting, had left the Franciscan, and joined the throng in whose midst stood Santerre, with Marat on his shoulders. "Long live the great friend of the people! Long live Marat!"

"Long live Marat!" cried and muttered the people. "Marat heals the people when the gentry have made them sick, and taken the very marrow from their bones. Marat is no 'gentleman.' Marat does not look down upon the people!"

"My friends, I repeat to you what I said before," shrieked Marat. "Did you ever hear of a wise man looking down upon the crown prince, and thinking more of the king, who is old, unnerved by his vices, and *blasé!* You, the people, you are the crown prince of France, and if you, at last, in your righteous and noble indignation, tread the tyrant under your feet, then the young prince, the people, will rule over France, and the beautiful words of the Bible will be fulfilled: 'There shall be one fold and one shepherd.' I have taken this improvised throne on the shoulders of a noble citizen only to tell you of an impropriety which the Queen of France has committed, and of the new usurpation with which she treads our laws under her feet, not tired out with opera-house balls and promenades by night. I will read you the address which the king sent to Parliament to-day, and with which the hearing of Cardinal de Rohan's case is to begin. Will the people hear it?"

"Yes, we will hear it," was the cry from all sides. "Read us the address."

Marat drew a dirty piece of paper from his pocket, and began to read with a loud, barking voice:

"Louis, by the grace of God, King of France and Navarre, to our dear and faithful counsellors, members of the court of our Parliament, greeting:

"It has come to our knowledge that parties named Böhmer and Bassenge have, without the knowledge of the queen, our much-loved consort and spouse, sold a diamond necklace, valued at one million six hundred thousand francs, to Cardinal de Rohan, who stated to them that he was acting in the matter under the queen's instructions. Papers were laid before them which they considered as approved and subscribed by the queen. After the said Böhmer and Bassenge had delivered the said necklace to the said cardinal, and had not received the first payment, they applied to the queen herself. We have beheld, not without righteous indignation, the eminent name, which in many ways is so dear to us, lightly spoken of, and denied the respect which is due to the royal majesty. We have thought that it pertains to the jurisdiction of our court to give a hearing to the said cardinal, and in view of the declaration which he has made before us, that he was deceived by a woman named Lamotte-Valois, we have held it necessary to secure his person, as well as that of Madame Valois, in order to bring all the parties to light who have been the instigators or abettors of such a plot. It is our will, therefore, that that matter come before the high court of Parliament, and that it be duly tried and judgment given."

"There you have this fine message," cried Marat; "there you have the web of his, which this Austrian woman has woven around us. For it is she who has sent this message to Parliament. You know well that we have no longer a King of France, but that all France is only the Trianon of the Austrian. It stands on all our houses, written over all the doors of government buildings, '*De par la reine!*' The Austrian woman is the Queen of France, and the good-natured king only writes what she dictates to him. She says in this paper that these precautions have been taken in order that she may learn who are the persons who have joined in the attack upon her distinguished and much-loved person. Who, then, is the abettor of Madame Valois? Who has received the diamonds from the cardinal, through the instrumentality of Madame Valois? I assert, it is the queen who has done it. She received the jewels, and now she denies the whole story. And now this woman Lamotte-Valois must draw the hot chestnuts out from the ashes. You know this; so it always is! Kings may go unpunished, they always have a *bête de souffrance*, which has to bear their burdens. But now that a cardinal, the grand almoner of France, is compelled to become the *bête de souffrance* for this Austrian woman, must show you, my friends, that her arrogance has reached its highest point. She has trodden modesty and morals under foot, and now she will tread the Church under foot also."

"Be still!" was the cry on all sides. "The carbineers and gendarmes are coming. Be still, Marat, be still! You must not be arrested. We do not want all our friends to be taken to the Bastile."

And really just at that instant, at the entrance of the street that led to the square on the side of the Tuileries, appeared a division of carbineers, advancing at great speed.

Marat jumped with the speed of a cat down from the huge form of the brewer. The crowd opened and made way for him, and before the carbineers had approached, Marat had disappeared.

With this day began the investigations respecting the necklace which Messrs. Böhmer and Bassenge had wanted to sell the queen through the agency of Cardinal Rohan. The latter was still a prisoner in the Bastile. He was treated with all the respect due to his rank. He had a whole suite of apartments assigned to him; he was allowed to retain the service of both his chamberlains, and at times was permitted to see and converse with his relatives, although, it is true, in the presence of the governor of the Bastile. But Foulon was a very pious Catholic, and kept a respectful distance from the lord cardinal, who never failed on such occasions to give him his blessing. In the many hearings which the cardinal had to undergo, the president of the committee of investigation treated him with extreme consideration, and if the cardinal felt himself wearied, the sitting was postponed till another day. Moreover, at these hearings the defender of the cardinal could take part, in order to summon those witnesses or accused persons who could contribute to the release of the cardinal, and show that he had been the victim of a deeply-laid plot, and had committed no other wrong than that of being too zealous in the service of the queen.

News spread abroad of numerous arrests occurring in Paris. It had been known from the royal decree that the Countess Lamotte-Valois had likewise been arrested and imprisoned in the Bastile; but people were anxious to learn decisively whether Count Cagliostro, the wonder-doctor, had been seized. The story ran that a young woman in Brussels, who had been involved in the affair, and who had an extraordinary resemblance to the Queen Marie Antoinette, had been arrested, and brought to Paris for confinement in the Bastile.

All Paris, all France watched this contest with eager interest, which, after many months, was still far from a conclusion, and respecting which so much could be said.

The friends of the queen asserted that her majesty was completely innocent; that she had never spoken to the

Countess Lamotte-Valois, and only once through her chamberlain. Weber had never sent her any assistance. But these friends of the queen were not numerous, and their number diminished every day.

The king had seen the necessity of making great reductions in the cost of maintaining his establishment, and in the government of the realm. France had had during the last years poor harvests. The people were suffering from a want of the bare necessities of life. The taxes could not be collected. A reform must be introduced, and those who before had rejoiced in a superfluity of royal gifts had to be contented with a diminution of them.

It had been the queen who allowed the tokens of royal favor to pour upon her friends, her companions in Trianon, like a golden rain. She had at the outset done this out of a hearty love for them. It was so sweet to cause those to rejoice whom she loved; so pleasant to see that charming smile upon the countenance of the Duchess de Polignac—that smile which only appeared when she had succeeded in making others happy. For herself the duchess never asked a favor; her royal friend could only, after a long struggle and threatening her with her displeasure, induce her to take the gifts which were offered out of a really loving heart.

But behind the Duchess Diana stood her brother and sister-in-law, the Duke and Duchess de Polignac, who were ambitious, proud, and avaricious; behind the Duchess Diana stood the three favorites of the royal society in Trianon—Lords Vaudreuil, Besenval, D'Adhémar—who desired embassies, ministerial posts, orders, and other tokens of honor.

Diana de Polignac was the channel through whom all these addressed themselves to the queen; she was the loved friend who asked whether the queen could not grant their demands. Louis granted all the requests to the queen, and Marie Antoinette then went to her loved friend Diana, in order to gratify her wishes, to receive a kiss, and to be rewarded with a smile.

The great noble families saw with envy and displeasure this supremacy of the Polignacs and the favorites of Trianon. They withdrew from the court; gave the "Queen of Trianon" over to her special friends and their citizen pleasures and sports, which, as they asserted, were not becoming to the great nobility. They gave the king over to his wife who ruled through him, and who, in turn, was governed by the Polignacs and the other favorites. To them and to their friends belonged all places, all honors; to them all applied who wanted to gain any thing for the court, and even they who wanted to get justice done them.

Around the royal pair there was nothing but intrigues, cabals, envy, and hostility. Every one wanted to be first in the favor of the queen, in order to gain influence and consideration; every one wanted to cast suspicion on the one who was next to him, in order to supplant him in the favor of Marie Antoinette.

The fair days of fortune and peace, of which the queen dreamed in her charming country home, thinking that her realizations were met when the sun had scarcely risen upon them, were gone. Trianon was still there, and the happy peasant-girl of Trianon had been unchanged in heart; but those to whom she had given her heart, those who had joined in her harmless amusement in her village there, were changed! They had cast aside the idyllic masks with which the good-natured and confiding queen had deceived herself. They were no longer friends, no longer devoted servants; they were mere place-hunters, intriguers, flatterers, not acting out of love, but out of selfishness.

Yet the queen would not believe this; she continued to be the tender friend of her friends, trusted them, depended upon their love, was happy in their neighborhood, and let herself be led by them just as the king let himself be led by her.

They set ministers aside, appointed new ones, placed their favorites in places of power, and drove their opponents into obscurity.

But there came a day when the queen began to see that she was not the ruler but the ruled,—when she saw that she was not acting out her own will, but was tyrannized over by those who had been made powerful through her favor.

"I have been compelled to take part in political affairs," said she, "because the king, in his noble, good-humored way, has too little confidence in himself, and, out of his self-distrust, lets himself be controlled by the opinions of others. And so it is best that I should be his first confidante, and that he should take me to be his chief adviser, for his interests are mine, and these children are mine, and surely no one can speak more truly and honestly to the King of France than his queen, his wife, the mother of his children! And so if the king is not perfectly independent, and feels himself too weak to stand alone, and independently to exert power, he ought to rest on me; I will bear a part in his government, his business, that at any rate they who control be not my opponents, my enemies!"

For a while she yielded to her friends and favorites who wanted to stand in the same relation to the queen that she did to the king—she yielded, not like Louis, from weakness, but from the very power of her love for them.

She yielded at the time when Diana de Polignac, urged by her brother-in-law, Polignac, and by Lord Besenval, conjured the queen to nominate Lord Calonne to be general comptroller of the finances. She yielded, and Calonne, the flatterer, the courtier of Polignac, received the important appointment, although Marie Antoinette experienced twinges of conscience for it, and did not trust the man whom she herself advanced to this high place. Public opinion, meanwhile, gave out that Lord Calonne was a favorite of the queen; and, while she bore him no special favor, and considered his appointment as a misfortune to France, she who herself promoted him became the object of public indignation.

Meanwhile the nomination of Lord Calonne was to be productive of real good. It gave rise to the publication of a host of libels and pamphlets which discussed the financial condition of France, and, in biting and scornful words, in the language of sadness and despair, developed the need and the misfortune of the land. The king gave the chief minister of police strict injunctions to send him all these ephemeral publications. He wanted to read them all, wanted to find the kernel of wheat which each contained, and, from his enemies, who assuredly would not flatter, he wanted to learn how to be a good king. And the first of his cares he saw to be a frugal king, and to limit his household expenses.

This time he acted independently; he asked no one's counsel, not even the queen's. As his own unconstrained act, he ordered a diminution of the court luxury, and a limitation of the great pensions which were paid to favorites. The great stable of the king must be reduced, the chief directorship of the post bureau must be abolished, the high salary of the governess of the royal children as well as that of the maid of honor of Madame Elizabeth, sister of the king, must be reduced.

And who were the ones affected by this? Chiefly the Polignac family. The Duke de Polignac was director of the royal mews, and next to him the Duke de Coigny. The Duke de Polignac was also chief director of the post department. His wife, Diana de Polignac, was also maid of honor to Madame Elizabeth, and Julia de Polignac was governess of the children of France.

They would not believe it; they held it impossible that so unheard-of a thing should happen, that their income should be reduced. The whole circle of intimate friends resorted to Trianon, to have an interview with the queen, to receive from her the assurance that she would not tolerate such a robbing of her friends, and that she would induce the king to take back his commands.

The queen, however, for the first time, made a stand against her friends.

"It is the will of the king," said she, "and I am too happy that the king has a will, to dare opposing it. May the king reign! It is his duty and his right, as it is the duty and right of all his subjects to conform to his wish and be subject to his will."

"But," cried Lord Besenval, "it is horrible to live in a country where one is not sure but he may lose to-morrow what he holds to-day; down to this time that has always been the Turkish fashion." *

The queen trembled and raised her great eyes with a look full of astonishment and pain to Besenval, then to the other friends; she read upon all faces alienation and unkindly feeling. The mask of devoted courtiers and true

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* His very words. See Goncourt's "Histoire de Marie Antoinette," p. 121.

servants had for the first time fallen from their faces, and Marie Antoinette discovered these all at once wholly estranged and unknown countenances; eyes without the beam of friendship, lips without the smile of devotion.

The queen sought to put her hand to her heart. It seemed to her as if she had been wounded with a dagger. She felt as if she must cry aloud with pain and grief. But she commanded herself and only gave utterance to a faint sigh.

"You are not the only ones who will lose, my friends," said she, gently. "The king is a loser, too; for if he gives up the great stables, he sacrifices to the common good his horses, his equipages, and, above all, his true servants. We must all learn to put up with limitations and a reduction of outlay. But we can still remain good friends, and here in Trianon pass many pleasant days with one another in harmless gayety and happy contentment. Come, my friends, let us forget these cares and these constraints; let us, despite all these things, be merry and glad. Duke de Coigny, you have been for a week my debtor in billiards, to-day you must make it up. Come, my friends, let us go into the billiard-room."

And the queen, who had found her gayety again, went laughing in advance of her friends into the next apartment, where the billiard-table stood. She took up her cue, and, brandishing it like a sceptre, cried, "Now, my friends, away with care—"

She ceased, for as she looked around her she saw that her friends had not obeyed her call. Only the Duke de Coigny, whom she had specially summoned, had followed the queen into the billiard-room.

A flash of anger shot from the eyes of the queen.

"How!" cried she, aloud, "did my companions not hear that I commanded them to follow me hither?"

"Your majesty," answered the Duke de Coigny, peevishly, "the ladies and gentlemen have probably recalled the fact that your majesty once made it a rule here in Trianon that every one should do as he pleases, and your majesty sees that *they* hold more strictly to the laws than others do."

"My lord," sighed the queen, "do you bring reproaches against me too? Are you also discontented?"

"And why should I be contented, your majesty?" asked the duke, with choler. "I am deprived of a post which hitherto has been held for life, and does your majesty desire that I should be contented? No, I am not contented. No, I do as the others do. I am full of anger and pain to see that nothing is secure more, that nothing is stable more, that one can rely upon nothing more—not even upon the word of kings."

"My lord duke," cried Marie Antoinette, with flashing anger, "you go too far, you forget that you are speaking to your queen."

"Madame," cried he, still louder, "here in Trianon there is no queen, there are no subjects! You yourself have said it, and I at least will hold to your words, even if you yourself do not. Let us play billiards, madame. I am at your service."

And while the Duke de Coigny said this, he seized with an angry movement the billiard-cue of the queen. It was a present which Marie Antoinette had received from her brother, the Emperor Joseph. It was made of a single rhinoceros skin, and was adorned with golden knobs. The king had a great regard for it, and no one before had ever ventured to use it excepting her alone.

"Give it to me, Coigny," said she, earnestly. "You deceive yourself, that is not your billiard-cue, that is mine."

"Madame," cried he, angrily, "what is mine is taken from me, and why should I not take what is not mine? It seems as if this were the latest fashion, to do what one pleases with the property of others; I shall hasten to have a share in this fashion, even were it only to show that I have learned something from your majesty. Let us begin."

Trembling with anger and excitement, he took two balls, laid them in the middle of the table, and gave the stroke. But it was so passionately given, and in such rage, that the cue glided by the balls and struck so strongly against the raised rim of the table that it broke.

The queen uttered an exclamation of indignation, and, raising the hand, pointed with a commanding gesture to the door.

"My Lord Duke de Coigny," said she, proudly, "I release you from the duty of ever coming again to Trianon. You are dismissed."

The duke, trembling with anger, muttering a few unintelligible words, made a slight, careless obeisance to the queen, and left the billiard-hall with a quick step.*

Marie Antoinette looked after him with a long and pained look. Then, with a deep sigh, she took up the bits of the broken cue and went into her little porcelain cabinet, in order to gain rest and self-command in solitude and stillness.

Reaching that place, and now sure that no one could observe her, Marie Antoinette sank with a deep sigh into an arm-chair, and the long-restrained tears started from her eyes.

"Oh," sighed she, sadly, "they will destroy every thing I have, every thing—my confidence, my spirit, my heart itself. They will leave me nothing but pain and misfortune, and not one of them whom I till now have held to be my friends, will share it with me."

CHAPTER VI.

THE TRIAL.

For a whole year the preparation for the trial had lasted, and to-day, the 31st of August, 1786, the matter would be decided. The friends and relatives of the cardinal had had time to manipulate not only public opinion, but also to win over the judges, the members of Parliament, to the cause of the cardinal, and to prejudice them against the queen. All the enemies of Marie Antoinette, the legitimists even, who saw their old rights of nobility encroached upon by the preference given to the Polignacs and other families which had sprung from obscurity; the party of the royal princes and princesses, whom Marie Antoinette had always offended, first because she was an Austrian, and later because she had allowed herself to win the love of the king; the men of the agitation and freedom party, who thundered in their clubs against the realm, and held it to be their sacred duty to destroy the *nimbus* which had hitherto enveloped the throne, and to show to the hungering people that the queen who lived in luxury was nothing more than a light-minded, voluptuous woman,—all these enemies of the queen had had time to gain over public opinion and the judges. The trial had been a welcome opportunity to all to give free play to their revenge, their indignation, and their hate. The family of the cardinal, sorely touched by the degradation which had come upon them all in their head, would, at the least, see the queen compromised with the cardinal, and if the latter should really come out from the trial as the deceived and duped one, Marie Antoinette should, nevertheless, share in the stain.

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* This scene is historical. See "Mémoires de Madame de Campan," vol. ii.

The Rohan family and their friends set therefore all means in motion, in order to win over public opinion and the judges. To this end they visited the members of Parliament, brought presents to those of them who were willing to receive them, made use of mercenary authors to hurl libellous pamphlets at the queen, published *brochures* which, in dignified language, defended the cardinal in advance, and exhibited him as the victim of his devotion and love to the royal family. Everybody read these pamphlets; and when at last the day of decision came, public opinion had already declared itself in favor of the cardinal and against the queen.

On the 31st of August, 1786, as already said, the trial so long in preparation was to be decided. The night before, the cardinal had been transferred from the Bastile to the prison, as had also the other prisoners who were involved in the case.

At early dawn the whole square before the prison was full of men, and the dependants of Rohan and the Agitators of Freedom, as Marat and his companions called themselves, were active here as ever to turn the feeling of the people against the queen.

In the court-house, on the other side of the great square, meanwhile, the great drama of the trial had begun. The members of Parliament, the judges in the case, sat in their flowing black garments, in long rows before the green table, and their serious, sad faces and sympathetic looks were all directed toward the cardinal, Louis de Rohan. But in spite of the danger of the situation, the noble face of the cardinal was completely undisturbed, and his bearing princely. He appeared in his full priestly array, substituting in place of the purple-red under-garment one of violet, as cardinals do when they appear in mourning. Over this he wore the short red cloak, and displayed all his orders; the red stockings, the silk shoes with jewelled buckles, completed his array. While entering, he raised his hands and gave his priestly blessing to those who should judge him, and perhaps condemn him. He then, in simple and dignified words, spoke as follows:

A relative of his, Madame de Boulainvillier, had, three years before, brought a young woman to him, and requested him to maintain her. She was of the most exalted lineage, the last in descent from the earlier kings of France, of the family of Valois. She called herself the Countess of Lamotte-Valois; her husband, the Count Lamotte, was the royal sub-lieutenant in some little garrison city, and his salary was not able to support them except meagrely. The young lady was beautiful, intellectual, of noble manners, and it was natural that the cardinal should interest himself in behalf of the unfortunate daughter of the kings of France. He supported her for a while, and after many exertions succeeded in obtaining a pension of fifteen hundred francs from King Louis XVI., in behalf of the last descendant of the Valois family. Upon this the countess went herself to Versailles, in order to render thanks in person for this favor. She returned the next day to Paris, beaming with joy, and told the cardinal that she had not only been received by the queen, but that Marie Antoinette had been exceedingly gracious to her, and had requested her to visit her often. From this day on, the countess had naturally gained new favor in the eyes of the cardinal, for she often went to Versailles; and from the accounts of her visits there, when she returned, it was clear that she stood in high favor with the queen. But now, unfortunately, the cardinal found himself in precisely the opposite situation. He stood in extreme disfavor with the queen. She never condescended to bestow a glance upon him, nor a word. The cardinal was for a long time inconsolable on account of this, and sought in vain to regain the favor of the queen. This he intrusted with the deepest confidence to the Countess Lamotte-Valois, and she, full of friendly zeal, had undertaken to speak to the queen in his behalf. Some days later she told the cardinal that she had fulfilled her promise; she had painted his sadness in such moving words that the queen appeared to be very much affected, and had told the countess that she would pardon all, if the cardinal would send her in writing an apology for the mortifications which he had inflicted upon herself and her mother Maria Theresa. The cardinal, of course, joyfully consented to this. He sent to the countess a document in which he humbly begged pardon for asking the Empress Maria Theresa, years before, when Marie Antoinette was yet Dauphiness of France, and he, the cardinal, was French ambassador in Vienna, to chide her daughter on account of her light and haughty behavior, and to charge herself with seeing it bettered. This was the only offence against the queen of which he felt himself guilty, and for this he humbly implored forgiveness. He had, at the same time, begged the queen for an audience, that he might pay his respects to her, and on bended knee ask her pardon. Some days after, the Countess Lamotte-Valois had handed him a paper, written with the queen's hand, as an answer to his letter.

The president here interrupted the cardinal: "Are you still in possession of this document, your eminence?"

The cardinal bowed. "I have always, since I had the fortune to receive them, carried with me the dear, and to me invaluable, letters of the queen. On the day when I was arrested in Versailles, they lay in my breast coat-pocket. It was my fortune, and the misfortune of those who, after I had been carried to the Bastile, burst into my palace, sealed my papers, and at once burned what displeased them. In this way these letters escaped the *auto-da-fe.* Here is the first letter of the queen."

He drew a pocket-book from his robe, took from it a small folded paper, and laid it upon the table before the president.

The president opened it and read: "I have received your brief, and am delighted to find you no longer culpable; in the mean while, I am sorry not to be able to give you the audience which you ask. As soon, however, as circumstances allow me, I shall inform you; till then, silence. MARIE ANTOINETTE OF FRANCE." *

A murmur of astonishment arose among the judges after this reading, and all looks were directed with deep sympathy to the cardinal, who, with a quiet, modest bearing, stood over against them. The glances of the president of the high court, directed themselves, after he had read the letter and laid it upon the green table, to the great dignitary of the Church, and then he seemed to notice for the first time that the cardinal, a prince and grand almoner of the King of France, was *standing* like a common criminal.

"Give the lord cardinal an arm-chair," he ordered, with a loud voice, and one of the guards ran to bring one of the broad, comfortable chairs of the judges, which was just then unoccupied, and carried it to the cardinal.

Prince Rohan thanked the judges with a slight inclination of his proud head, and sank into the arm-chair. The accused and the judges now sat on the same seats, and one would almost have suspected that the cardinal, in his magnificent costume, with his noble, lofty bearing, his peaceful, passionless face, and sitting in his arm-chair, alone and separated from all others, was himself the judge of those who, in their dark garments and troubled and oppressed spirits, and restless mien, were sitting opposite him.

"Will your eminence have the goodness to proceed?" humbly asked the president of the court, after a pause.

The cardinal nodded as the sign of assent, and continued his narrative.

This letter of the queen naturally filled him with great delight, particularly as he had a personal interview with her majesty in prospect, and he had implored the Countess Valois all the more to procure this meeting, because, in spite of the forgiveness which the queen had given to the cardinal, she continued on all occasions, where he had the happiness to be in her presence, to treat him with extreme disdain. On one Sunday, when he was reading mass before their majesties, he took the liberty to enter the audience-room and to address the queen. Marie Antoinette bestowed upon him only an annihilating look of anger and scorn, and turned her back upon him, saying, at the same time, with a loud voice, to the Duchess of Polignac: "What a shameless act! These people believe they may do any thing if they wear the purple. They believe they may rank with kings, and even address them." These proud and cutting words had naturally deeply wounded the cardinal, and, for the first time, the doubt was suggested to him whether, in the end, all the communications of the Countess Valois, even the letter of the queen, might not prove to be false, for it appeared to him impossible that the queen could be secretly, favorably inclined to a man whom she openly scorned. In his anger he said so to the Countess Lamotte, and told her that he should hold all that she had brought him from the queen to be false, unless, within a very short time, she could procure what he had so long and so urgently besought, namely, an audience with the queen. He desired this audience as a proof that Marie Antoinette was really changed, and, at the same time, as a proof that the Countess Lamotte-Valois had told him the truth. The countess laughed at his distrust, and promised to try all the arts of address with the queen, in order to gain for the cardinal the desired audience. The latter, who thought he recognized in the beautiful and expressive countenance of the lady innocence and honorableness, now regretted his hasty words, and said to Madame Lamotte, that in case the queen would really grant him a private audience, he would give her (the countess) fifty thousand francs as a sign of his gratitude.

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* Goncourt.—"Histoire de Marie Antoinette," p. 143.

A murmur of applause and of astonishment rose at these words from the spectators, comprising some of the greatest noble families of France, the Rohans, the Guémenés, the Count de Vergennes, and all the most powerful enemies of the queen, who had taken advantage of this occasion in order to avenge themselves on the Austrian, who had dared to choose her friends and select her society, not in accordance with lineage, but as her own pleasure dictated.

The president of the court did not consider this murmur of applause marked enough to be reprimanded, and let it be continued.

"And did the Countess Lamotte-Valois procure for you this audience?" he then asked.

Prince Rohan was silent a moment, his face grew pale, his features assumed for the first time a troubled expression, and the painful struggles which disturbed his soul could be seen working within him.

"May it please this noble court," he replied, after a pause, with feeling, trembling voice, "I feel at this moment that, beneath the robe of the priest, the heart of the man beats yet. It is, however, for every man a wrong, an unpardonable wrong, to disclose the confidence of a lady, and to reveal to the open light of day the favors which have been granted by her. But I must take this crime upon myself, because I have to defend the honor of a priest, even of a dignitary in the Church, and also because I do not dare to suffer my purple to be soiled with even the suspicion of a lie, or an act of falsehood. It may be—and I fear it even myself—it may be, that in this matter, I myself was the deceived one, but I dare not bring suspicion upon my tiara that I was the deceiver, and, therefore, I have to meet the stern necessity of disclosing the secret of a lady and a queen."

"Besides this," said the president, solemnly—"besides this, your eminence may graciously consider, in presence of the authority given you by God, all the tender thoughts of the cardinal must be silent. The duty of a dignitary of the Church commands you to go before all other men in setting them a noble example, and one worthy of imitation. It is your sacred duty, in accordance with the demands of truth, to give the most detailed information regarding every thing that concerns this affair, and your eminence will have the goodness to remember that we are the secular priests of God, before whom every accused person must confess the whole truth with a perfect conscience."

"I thank you, Mr. President," said the cardinal, with so gentle and tremulous a voice, that you might hear after it a faint sob from some deeply-veiled ladies who sat on the spectators' seats, and so that even the eyes of President de l'Aigre filled with tears—"I thank you, Mr. President," repeated the cardinal, breathing more freely. "You take a heavy burden from my heart, and your wisdom instructs me as to my own duty."

The president blushed with pleasure at the high praises of the cardinal.

"And now," he said, "I take the liberty of repeating my question, did the Countess Lamotte-Valois succeed in procuring for your eminence a secret audience with the queen?"

"She did," replied the cardinal, "she did procure an interview for me."

And compelling himself to a quiet manner, he went on with his story: The Countess de Valois came to him after two days with a joyful countenance, and brought to him the request to accompany the Countess Valois two days later to Versailles, where, in the garden, in a place indicated by the countess, the meeting of the queen and the cardinal should take place. The cardinal was to put on the simple, unpretending dress of a citizen of Paris, a blue cloth coat, a round hat, and high leather boots. The cardinal, full of inexpressible delight at this, could, notwithstanding, scarcely believe that the queen would show him this intoxicating mark of her favor; upon which the Countess Valois, laughing, showed him a letter of the queen, directed to her, on gold-bordered paper, and signed like the note which he had received before—"Marie Antoinette of France." In this note the queen requested her dear friend to go carefully to work to warn the cardinal to speak softly during the interview, because there were ears lurking in the neighborhood, and not to come out from the thicket till the queen should give a sign.

After reading this letter, the cardinal had no more doubts, but surrendered himself completely to his joy, his impatience, and longed for the appointed hour to arrive. At last this hour came, and, in company with the countess, the cardinal, arrayed in the appointed dress, repaired in a simple hired carriage to Versailles. The countess led him to the terrace of the palace, where she directed the cardinal to hide behind a clump of laurel-trees, and then left him, in order to inform the queen, who walked every evening in the park, in company with the Count and Countess d'Artois, of the presence of the cardinal, and to conduct her to him. The latter now remained alone, and, with loud-beating heart, listened to every sound, and, moving gently around, looked down the long alley which ran between the two fountains, in order to catch sight of the approach of the queen. It was a delightful evening; the full moon shone in golden clearness from the deep-blue sky, and illuminated all the objects in the neighborhood with a light like that of day. It now disclosed a tall, noble figure, clad in a dark-red robe, and with large blue pins in her hair, hurrying to the terrace, and followed by the Countess Valois.

To the present moment the cardinal had slightly doubted as to his unmeasurable good fortune—now he doubted no more. It was the queen, Marie Antoinette, who was approaching. She wore the same dress, the same *coiffure* which she had worn the last Sunday, when after the mass he had gone to Versailles to drive.

Yes, it was the queen, who was hurrying across the terrace, and approaching the thicket behind which the cardinal was standing.

"Come," whispered she, softly, and the cardinal quickly emerged from the shade, sank upon his knee before the queen, and eagerly pressed the fair hand which she extended to him to his lips. "Your eminence," whispered the queen to him, "I can unfortunately spend only a moment here. I cherish nothing against you, and shall soon show you marks of my highest favor. Meantime, accept this token of my grace." And Marie Antoinette took a rose from her bosom and gave it to the cardinal. "Accept, also, this remembrancer," whispered the queen, again placing a little case in his hand. "It is my portrait. Look often at it, and never doubt me, I—"

At this moment the Countess Valois, who had been waiting at some distance, hastily came up.

"Some one is coming," whispered she; "for God's sake, your majesty, fly!"

Voices were audible in the distance, and soon they approached. The queen grasped the hand of the Countess Lamotte.

"Come, my friend," said she. "Farewell, cardinal, *au revoir!*"

Full of joy at the high good fortune which had fallen to him, and at the same time saddened at the abrupt departure of the queen, the cardinal turned back to Paris. On the next day the Countess Valois brought a billet from the queen, in which she deeply regretted that their interview yesterday had been so brief, and promising a speedy appointment again. Some days after this occurrence, which constantly occupied the mind of the cardinal, he was obliged to go to Alsace, to celebrate a church festival. On the very next day, however, came the husband of the countess, Count Lamotte, sent as a courier by the countess. He handed the cardinal a letter from the queen, short and full of secrecy, like the earlier ones.

"The moment," wrote the queen—"the moment which I desired is not yet come. But I beg you to return at once to Paris, because I am in a secret affair, which concerns me personally, and which I shall intrust to you alone, and in which I need your assistance. The Countess Lamotte-Valois will give you the key to this riddle."

As if on the wings of birds, the cardinal returned to Paris, and at once repaired to the little palace which the countess had purchased with the fruits of his liberality. Here he learned of her the reason of his being sent for. The matter in question was the purchasing of a set of jewels, which the royal jewellers, Böhmer and Bassenge, had often offered to the queen. Marie Antoinette had seen the necklace, and had been enraptured with the size and beauty of the diamonds. But she had had the spirit to refuse to purchase the collar, in consequence of the enormous price which the jewellers demanded. She had, however, subsequently regretted her refusal, and the princely set of gems, the like of which did not exist in Europe, had awakened the most intense desire on the part of the queen to possess it. She wanted to purchase it secretly, without the knowledge of the king, and to pay for it gradually out of the savings of her own purse. But just then the jewellers Böhmer and Bassenge had it in view to send the necklace to Constantinople for the Sultan, who wanted to present it to the best-loved of his wives.

But before completing the sale, the crown jewellers made one more application to the queen, declaring that if she would consent to take the necklace, they would be content with any conditions of payment. In the mean time, the private treasury of the queen was empty. The severe winter had induced much suffering and misfortune, and the queen had given all her funds to the poor. But as she earnestly desired to purchase the necklace, she would give her grand almoner a special mark of her favor in granting to him the commission of purchasing it in her name. He should receive a paper from the queen's own hand authorizing the purchase, yet he should keep this to himself, and show it only to the court jewellers at the time of the purchase. The first payment of six hundred thousand francs the cardinal was to pay from his own purse, the remaining million the queen would pay in instalments of one hundred thousand francs each, at the expiration of every three months. In the next three months, the six hundred thousand francs advanced by the cardinal should be refunded.

The cardinal felt himself highly flattered by this token of the queen's confidence, and desired nothing more than the written authorization of the queen, empowering him to make the purchase at once. This document was not waited for long. Two days only passed before the Countess Lamotte-Valois brought it, dated at Trianon, and subscribed Marie Antoinette of France. Meanwhile some doubts arose in the mind of the cardinal. He turned to his friend and adviser, Count Cagliostro, for counsel. The latter had cured him years before while very sick, and since that time had always been his disinterested friend, and the prophet, so to speak, who always indicated the cardinal's future to him. This man, so clear in his foresight, so skilful in medicine, was now taken into confidence, and his advice asked. Count Cagliostro summoned the spirits that waited upon him, before the cardinal, one solitary night. He asked these invisible presences what their counsel was, and the oracle answered, that the affair was one worthy of the station of the cardinal; that it would have a fortunate issue; that it put the seal upon the favors of the queen, and would usher in the fortunate day which would bring the great talents of the cardinal into employment for the benefit of France and the world.

The cardinal doubted and hesitated no longer. He went at once to the court jewellers Böhmer and Bassenge: he did not conceal from them that he was going to buy the necklace in the name of the queen, and showed them the written authorization. The jewellers entered readily into the transaction. The cardinal made a deposit of six hundred thousand francs, and Böhmer and Bassenge gave him the necklace. It was the day before a great festival, and at the festival the queen wanted to wear the necklace. In the evening a trusted servant of the queen was to take the necklace from the dwelling of the Countess Lamotte-Valois. The countess herself requested the cardinal to be present, though unseen, when the delivery should take place.

In accordance with this agreement, the cardinal repaired to the palace of the countess on the evening of February 1st, 1784, accompanied by a trusted valet, who carried the casket with the necklace. At the doorway he himself took the collar and gave it to the countess. She conducted the cardinal to an alcove adjoining her sitting-room. Through the door provided with glass windows he could dimly see the sitting-room.

After some minutes the main entrance opened, and a voice cried: "In the service of the queen!" A man in the livery of the queen, whom the cardinal had often seen at the countess's, and whom she had told was a confidential servant of the queen, entered and demanded the casket in the name of the queen. The Countess Valois took it and gave it to the servant, who bowed and took his leave. At the moment when the man departed, bearing this costly set of jewels, the cardinal experienced an inexpressible sense of satisfaction at having had the happiness of conferring a service upon the Queen of France, the wife of the king, the mother of the future king,—not merely in the purchase of the diamonds which she desired, but still more in preventing the young and impulsive woman from taking the unbecoming step of applying to any other gentleman of the court for this assistance.

At these words the spectators broke into loud exclamations, and one of the veiled ladies cried: "Lords Vaudreuil and Coigny would not have paid so much, but they would have demanded more." And this expression, too, was greeted with loud acclaims.

The first president of the court, Baron de l'Aigre, here cast a grave look toward the tribune where the spectators sat, but his reproach died away upon lips which disclosed a faint inclination to smile.

"I now beg your eminence," he said, "to answer the following question: "Did Queen Marie Antoinette personally thank you for the great service which, according to your showing, you did her? How is it with the payments which the queen pledged herself to make?"

The cardinal was silent for a short time, and looked sadly before him. "Since the day when I closed this unfortunate purchase, I have experienced only disquietudes, griefs, and humiliations. This is the only return which I have received for my devotion. The queen has never bestowed a word upon me. At the great festival she did not even wear the necklace which she had sent for on the evening before. I complained of this to the countess, and the queen had the goodness to write me a note, saying that she had found the necklace too valuable to wear on that day, because it would have attracted the attention of the king and the court. I confided in the words of the queen, and experienced no doubts about the matter till the unhappy day when the queen was to make the first payment to the jewellers, and when she sent neither to me nor to the jewellers a word. Upon this a fearful suspicion began to trouble me,—that my devotion to the queen might have been taken advantage of, in order to deceive and mislead me. When this dreadful thought seized me, I shuddered, and had not power to look down into the abyss which suddenly yawned beneath me. I at once summoned the Countess Lamotte, and desired her solution of this inexplicable conduct of the queen. She told me that she had been on the point of coming to me and informing me, at the request of the queen, that other necessary outlays had prevented the queen's paying me the six hundred thousand francs that I had disbursed to Böhmer at the purchase of the necklace, and that she must be content with paying the interest of this sum, thirty thousand francs. The queen requested me to be satisfied for the present with this arrangement, and to be sure of her favor. I trusted the words of the countess once more, took fresh courage, and sent word to the queen that I should always count myself happy to conform to her arrangements, and be her devoted servant. The countess dismissed me, saying that she would bring the money on the morrow. In the mean time, something occurred that awakened all my doubts and all my anxieties afresh. I visited the Duchess de Polignac, and while I was with her, there was handed her a note from the queen. I requested the duchess, in case the billet contained no secret, to show it to me, that I might see the handwriting of the queen. The duchess complied with my request, and—"

The cardinal was silent, and deep inward excitement made his face pale. He bowed his head, folded his hands, and his lips moved in whispered prayer.

The judges, as well as the spectators, remained silent. No one was able to break the solemn stillness by an audible breath—by a single movement.

At length, after a long pause, when the cardinal had raised his head again, the president asked gently: "And so your eminence saw the note of the queen, and was it not the same writing as the letters which you had received?"

"No, it was not the same!" cried the cardinal, with pain. "No, it was an entirely different hand. Only the signature had any resemblance, although the letter to the duchess was simply subscribed 'Marie Antoinette.' I hastened home, and awaited the coming of the countess with feverish impatience. She came, smiling as ever, and brought me the thirty thousand francs. With glowing, passionate words, I threw my suspicions in her face. She appeared a moment alarmed, confused, and then granted that it was possible that the letters were not from the hand of the queen, but that she had dictated them. But the signatures were the queen's, she could take her oath of it. I again took a little courage; but soon after the countess had left me, the jewellers came in the highest excitement to me, to tell me that, receiving no payments from the queen, they had applied in writing to her several times, without receiving any answer; their efforts to obtain an audience were also all in vain, and so they had at last applied to the first lady-in-waiting on the queen, Madame de Campan, with whom they had just had an interview. Madame de Campan had told them that the queen did not possess the necklace; that no Countess Lamotte-Valois had ever had an interview with the queen; that she had told the jewellers with extreme indignation that some one had been deceiving them; that they were the victims of a fraud, and that she would at once go to Trianon to inform the queen of this fearful intrigue. This happened on a Thursday; on the following Sunday I repaired to Versailles to celebrate high mass, and the rest you know. I have nothing further to add."

"In the name of the court I thank your eminence for your open and clear exposition of this sad history," said the president, solemnly. "Your eminence needs refreshment, you are free to withdraw and to return to the Bastile."

The cardinal rose and bowed to the court. All the judges stood, and respectfully returned the salutation.*

One of the veiled ladies, sitting on the spectators' seats, cried with trembling voice: "God bless the cardinal, the noble martyr of the realm!"

All the spectators repeated the cry; and, while the words yet rang, the cardinal, followed by the officers who were to take him to the Bastile, had left the hall.

"Guards!" cried President de l'Aigre, with a loud voice, "bring in the accused, the Countess de Lamotte-Valois!"

All eyes directed themselves to the door which the guards now opened, and through which the accused was to enter.

Upon the threshold of this door appeared now a lady of slim, graceful form, in a toilet of the greatest elegance, her head decorated with feathers, flowers, and lace, her cheeks highly painted, and her fine ruby lips encircled by a pert, and at the same time a mocking smile, which displayed two rows of the finest teeth. With this smile upon her lips she moved forward with a light and spirited step, turning her great blazing black eyes with proud, inquisitive looks now to the stern semicircle of judges and now to the tribune, whose occupants had not been able to suppress a movement of indignation and a subdued hiss.

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* Historical.—See "Mémoires de l'Abbé Georgel," vol. i.

"Gentlemen," said she, with a clear, distinct voice, in which not the faintest quiver, not the least excitement was apparent—"gentlemen, are we here in a theatre, where the players who tread the boards are received with audible signs of approval or of disfavor?"

The president, to whom her dark eyes were directed, deigned to give no answer, but turned with an expressive gesture to the officer who stood behind the accused.

He understood this sign, and brought from the corner of the hall a wooden seat of rough, clumsy form, to whose high back of unpolished dirty wood two short iron chains were attached.

This seat he placed near the handsome, gaudily-dressed countess with her air of assurance and self-confidence, and pointed to it with a commanding gesture.

"Be seated," he said, with a loud, lordly tone. She shrugged her shoulders, and looked at the offered seat with an expression of indignation. "How!" she cried, "who dares offer me the chair of criminals to sit in?"

"Be seated," replied the officer. "The seat of the accused is ready for you, and the chains upon it are for those who are not inclined to take it."

A cry of anger escaped from her lips, and her eyes flashed an annihilating glance upon the venturesome officer, but he did not appear to be in the least affected by the lightning from her eyes, but met it with perfect tranquillity.

"If you do not take it of yourself, madame," he said, "I shall be compelled to summon the police; we shall then compel you to take the seat, and in order to prevent your rising, the chains will be bound around your arms."

The countess answered only with an exclamation of anger, and fixed her inquiring looks upon the judges, the accusers, the defenders, and then again upon the spectators. Everywhere she encountered only a threatening mien and suspicious looks, nowhere an expression of sympathy.

But it was just this which seemed to give her courage and to steel her strength. She raised her head proudly, forced the smile again upon her lips, and took her seat upon the chair with a grace and dignity as if she were in a brilliant saloon, and was taking her seat upon an elegant sofa.

The president of the court now turned his grave, rigid face to the countess, and asked: "Who are you, madame? What is your name, and how old are you?"

The countess gave way to a loud, melodious laugh. "My lord president," answered she, "it is very clear that you are not much accustomed to deal with ladies, or else you would not take the liberty of asking a lady, like myself in her prime, after her age. I will pardon you this breach of etiquette, and I will magnanimously pretend not to have heard that question, in order to answer the others. You wish to know my name? I am the Countess Lamotte-Valois of France, the latest descendant of the former Kings of France; and if in this unhappy land, which is trodden to the dust by a stupid king and a dissolute queen, right and justice still prevailed, I should sit on the throne of France, and the coquette who now occupies it would be sitting here in this criminal's chair, to justify herself for the theft which she has committed, for it is Marie Antoinette who possesses the diamonds of the jeweller Böhmer, not I."

At the spectators' tribune a gentle bravo was heard at these words, and this daring calumny upon the queen found no reproval even from the judges' bench.

"Madame," said L'Aigre, after a short pause, "instead of simply answering my questions you reply with a high-sounding speech, which contains an untruth, for it is not true that you can lay any claim to the throne of France. The descendants of bastards have claims neither to the name nor the rank of their fathers. Since, in respect to your name and rank, you have answered with an untruth, I will tell you who and what you are. Your father was a poor peasant in the village of Auteuil. He called himself Valois, and the clergyman of the village one day told the wife of the proprietor of Auteuil, Madame de Boulainvillier, that the peasant of Valois was in possession of family papers, according to which it was unquestionable that he was an illegitimate descendant of the old royal family.

The good priest at the same time recommended the poor, hungry children of the day-laborer Valois to the kindness of Madame de Boulainvillier, and the old lady hastened to comply with this recommendation. She had the daughter of Valois called to her to ask her how she could assist her in her misery."

"Say rather to gain for herself the credit that she had shown kindnesses to the descendants of the Kings of France," interrupted the countess, quickly.

"This would have been a sorry credit," replied President L'Aigre. "The Valois family had for a long time been extinct, and the last man of that name who is known, was detected in counterfeiting, sentenced, and executed. Your grandfather was an illegitimate son of the counterfeiter Valois. That is the sum total of your relation to the royal family of France. It is possible that upon this very chair on which you now sit, accused of this act of deception, your natural great-grandfather once sat, accused like you of an act of deception, in order, after conviction of his crime, to be punished according to the laws of France."

The countess made a motion as if she wanted to rise from the unfortunate seat, but instantly the heavy hand of the officer was laid upon her shoulder, and his threatening voice said, "Sit still, or I put on the chains!"

The Countess Lamotte-Valois of France sank back with a loud sob upon the chair, and for the first time a deathlike paleness diffused itself over her hitherto rosy cheeks.

"So Madame de Boulainvillier had the children of the day-laborer Valois called," continued the president, with his imperturbable self-possession. "The oldest daughter, a girl of twelve years, pleased her in consequence of her lively nature and her attractive exterior. She took her to herself, she gave her an excellent education, she was resolved to provide for her whole future; when one day the young Valois disappeared from the chateau of Madame de Boulainvillier. She had eloped with the sub-lieutenant, Count Lamotte, and announced to her benefactress, in a letter which she left behind, that she was escaping from the slavery in which she had hitherto lived, and that she left her curse to those who wanted to hinder her marrying the man of her choice. But in order to accomplish her marriage, she confessed that she had found it necessary to rob the casket of Madame de Boulainvillier, and that out of this money she should defray her expenses. It was a sum of twenty thousand francs which the fugitive had robbed from her benefactress."

"I take the liberty of remarking to you, Mr. President, that you are there making use of a totally false expression," interrupted the countess. "It cannot be said that I robbed this sum. It was the dowry which Madame de Boulainvillier had promised to give me in case of my marriage, and I only took what was my own, as I was upon the point of marrying. Madame de Boulainvillier herself justified me in taking this sum, for she never asked me to return it or filed an accusation against me."

"Because she wanted to prevent the matter becoming town-talk," remarked the president, quietly. "Madame de Boulainvillier held her peace, and relinquished punishment to the righteous Judge who lives above the stars."

"And who surely has not descended from the stars to assume the president's chair of this court," cried Lamotte, with a mocking laugh.

President L'Aigre, without heeding the interruption, continued:

"The daughter of the laborer Valois married the sub-lieutenant Lamotte, who lived in a little garrison city of the province, and sought to increase his meagre salary by many ingenious devices. He not merely gave instruction in fencing and riding, but he was also a very skilful card-player—so skilful, that fortune almost always accompanied him."

"My lord," cried the countess, springing up, "you seem to want to hint that Count Lamotte played a false game. You surely would not venture to say this if the count were free, for he would challenge you for this insult, and it is well known that his stroke is fatal to those who stand in the way of his dagger."

"I hint at nothing, and I merely call things by their right names," replied the president, smiling. "In consequence of strong suspicions of false play, Count Lamotte was driven out of his regiment; and as the young pair had in the mean time consumed the stolen wedding-money, they must discover some new way of making a living. The young husband repaired to the south of France to continue his card-playing; the young wife, having for her fortune her youth and the splendor of her name, repaired to Paris, both resolved *de corriger la fortune* wherever and however they could. This, madame," continued the president, after a pause, "this is the true answer to my question, how you are called, and who you are."

"The answer is, however, not yet quite satisfactory," replied Lamotte, in an impudent tone. "You have forgotten to add that I am the friend of the cardinal, Prince Louis de Rohan, the confidante and friend of Queen Marie Antoinette, and that both now want to do me the honor to make me their *bête de souffrance*, and to let me suffer for what they have done and are guilty of. My whole crime lies in this, that I helped the Queen of France gain the jewels for which her idle and trivial soul longed; that I helped the amorous and light-minded cardinal approach the object of his love, and procured for him an interview with the queen. That is all that can be charged upon me; I procured for the queen the fine necklace of Messrs. Böhmer and Bassenge; I gave the cardinal, as the price of a part of the necklace, a tender *tête-à-tête* with the queen. The cardinal will not deny that in the garden of Versailles he had a rendezvous with the queen, that he kissed her hand and received a rose from her; and the queen will be compelled to confess in the end that the necklace is in her possession. What blame can be laid on me for this?"

"The blame of deception, of defalcation, of forgery, of calumny, of theft," replied the president, with solemn earnestness. "You deceived Cardinal de Rohan in saying that you knew the queen, that you were intimate with her, that she honored you with her confidence. You forged, or got some one to forge, the handwriting of the queen, and prepared letters which you gave to the cardinal, pretending that they came from the queen. You misused the devotion of the cardinal to the royal family, and caused his eminence to believe that the queen desired his services in the purchase of the necklace; and after the cardinal, full of pleasure, had been able to do a service to the queen, had treated with Böhmer and Bassenge, had paid a part of the purchase money, and gave you the necklace in charge to be put into the queen's hands, you were guilty of theft, for the queen knows nothing of the necklace; the queen never gave you the honor of an audience, the queen never spoke with you, and no one of the queen's companions ever saw the Countess Lamotte."

"That means they disown me; they all disown me!" cried the countess, with flaming rage, stamping upon the floor with her little satin-covered foot. "But the truth will one day come to the light. The cardinal will not deny that the queen gave him a rendezvous at Versailles; that she thanked him personally for the necklace which she had procured through his instrumentality."

"Yes, the truth will come to the light," answered the president. "I summon the crown attorney, M. de Borillon, to present the charge against the Countess Lamotte-Valois."

On this the attorney-general, Borillon, rose, and amid the breathless silence of the assembly began to speak. He painted the countess as a crafty, skilful adventuress, who had come to Paris with the determined purpose of making her fortune in whatever way it could be done. He then spoke of the destitution in which she had lived at first, of the begging letters which she addressed to all people of distinction, and especially to Cardinal de Rohan, in consequence of his well-known liberality. He painted in lively and touching colors the scene where the cardinal, struck by the name of the suppliant, went in person to the attic to convince himself whether it were really true that a descendant of the Kings of France had been driven to such poverty and humiliation, and to give her assistance for the sake of the royal house, to which he was devoted heart and soul. He painted further how the cardinal, attracted by the lively spirits, amiability, and intellectual character of Lamotte-Valois, had given her his confidence, and believed what she told him about her favor with the queen, and her intimate relations with her. "The cardinal," continued the attorney-general, "did not doubt for a moment the trustworthiness of the countess; he had not the least suspicion that he was appointed to become the victim of an intriguer, who would take advantage of his noble spirit, his magnanimity, to deceive him and to enrich herself. The countess knew the boundless devotion of the cardinal to the queen; she had heard his complaints of the proud coldness, the public slights which she offered to him. On the other hand, she had heard of the costly diamond necklace which Böhmer and Bassenge had repeatedly offered to the queen, and that she had refused to take it on account of the enormous price which they demanded for it. On this the countess formed her plan and it succeeded perfectly. She caused the cardinal to hope that he would soon have an audience of the queen, if he would give solid assurances of his devotion, and when he professed himself ready, she proposed to him, as acting under the queen's instructions, the purchase of the necklace. The cardinal declared himself ready to accede, and the affair took the course already indicated with such touching frankness and lofty truthfulness by his eminence. He brought the purchase to a conclusion; he paid the first instalment of six hundred thousand francs, and gave the necklace to the friend of the queen, the Countess Lamotte-Valois, after he had availed himself of her assistance in receiving from the lips and hand of the queen in the garden of Versailles the assurance of the royal favor. The countess at once brought the cardinal a paper from the queen, stating that she had received the necklace, and conveying to him the warm thanks of his queen. The cardinal felt himself richly rewarded by this for all his pains and outlays, and in the joy of his heart wanted to repay her who, in so prudent and wise a manner, had effected his reconciliation with the queen. He settled upon her a yearly pension of four thousand francs, payable her whole life, and the countess accepted it with tears of emotion, and swore eternal gratitude to the cardinal. But while uttering this very oath she was conspiring against her benefactor, and laughing in her sleeve at the credulous prince who had fallen into the very net which she had prepared for him. Her most active ally was her husband, whom she had long before summoned to Paris, and who was the abetter of her intrigue. The countess had now become a rich lady, and was able to indulge all her cravings for splendor and luxury. She who, down to that time, had stood as a suppliant before the doors of the rich, could herself have a princely dwelling, and could devote great sums to its adornment. The most celebrated makers were called on to furnish the furniture and the decorations, and, as if by a touch of magic, she was surrounded by fabulous luxury; the fairest equipages stood ready for her, the finest horses in her stable, and a troop of lackeys waited upon the beck of the fair lady who displayed her princely splendor before them. A choice silver service glittered upon her table, and she possessed valuables worth more than a hundred thousand francs. More than this, she enjoyed the best of all, a tender and devoted husband, who overloaded her with presents; from London, whither he was called by pressing family affairs, he sent his wife a medallion of diamonds, which was subsequently estimated at two hundred and thirty louis-d'ors, and a pearl bracelet worth two hundred louis-d'ors. Returning from his journey, he surprised his wife with a new and splendid present. He had purchased a palace in Bar-sur-Aube, and thither the whole costly furniture of his hired house was carried. Would you know where all these rare gifts were drawn? The Countess Lamotte had broken the necklace, and taken the stones from their setting. For the gold alone which was used in the setting she received forty thousand francs; for one of the diamonds, which she sold in Paris, she received fifty thousand francs; for another, thirty-six thousand. The diamonds of uncommon size and immense worth she did not dare to dispose of in Paris, and her husband was compelled to journey to London to sell a portion of them there. On his return thence he was able to buy for his wife the house in Bar-sur-Aube, for the sum received in London was four hundred thousand francs in gold, in addition to the pearls and the diamond medallion which he brought his wife from London. And of all this luxury, this extravagance, Cardinal de Rohan had naturally no suspicion. When he visited her, where did the countess receive him? In a poorly-furnished attic-chamber of the house hired by her. In simple, modest attire, she met him there and told him with trembling voice that the rich countess who lived in the two lower stories of the house had allowed her to have this suite next to the roof gratis. But when danger approached, and Lamotte began to fear that Böhmer and Bassenge, in claiming their pay from the queen, would bring the history of the necklace to the light, the countess came to the cardinal to pay her parting respects, as she was going into the country to a friend to live in the greatest privacy. She left Paris merely to repair to Bar-sur-Aube and live in her magnificent palace. She tarried there so long as to allow the police detectives to discover in the rich and elegant lady the intriguer Lamotte-Valois, and to effect the imprisonment of her husband and his friend, the so-called Count Cagliostro. Her other abetters had put themselves out of sight, and were not to be discovered. However, their arrest was not specially necessary, for the facts were already sufficiently strong and clear. Some of the diamonds which Lamotte had sold in London were brought back to Paris, and had been recognized by Böhmer and Bassenge as belonging to the necklace which they had sold to the queen. The goldsmith had been discovered to whom the countess had sold the golden setting of the necklace, and Böhmer and Bassenge had recognized in the fragments which remained their own work. It is unquestionable that the Countess Lamotte-Valois, through her intrigues and cunning, had been able to gain possession of the necklace, and that she had appropriated it to her own use. The countess is therefore guilty of theft and deception. She is, moreover, guilty of forgery, for she has imitated the handwriting of the queen, and subscribed it with the royal name. But the hand is neither that of the queen, nor does the queen ever subscribe herself 'Marie Antoinette of France.' This makes Lamotte open to the charge of both forgery and contempt of majesty, for she has even dared to drag the sacred person of the Queen of France into her mesh of lies, and to make her majesty the heroine of a dishonorable love-adventure."

"My lord," cried Countess Lamotte, with a loud laugh, "you are not driven to the necessity of involving the queen in dishonorable love-adventures. The queen is in reality the heroine of so many adventures of this character, that you can have your choice of them. A queen who visits the opera-house balls incognito, drives thither masked and in a fiacre, and who appears incognito on the terraces of Versailles with strange soldiers, exchanging jocose words with them—a queen of the type of this Austrian may not wonder to find her name identified with the heroine of a love-adventure. But we are speaking now not of a romance, but of a reality, and I am not to be accused of forgery and contempt of majesty without having the proofs brought forward. This cannot, however, be done, for I have the proofs of my innocence. The cardinal had an interview with the queen, and she gave him a receipt for the diamonds. If she wrote her signature differently from her usual manner, it is not my fault. It only shows that the queen was cunning enough to secure an *alibi*, so to speak, for her signature, and to leave a rear door open for herself, through which she could slip with her exalted name, in case the affair was discovered, and leave me to be her *bête de souffrance.* But I am by no means disposed to accept this part, for I declare here solemnly, before God and man, that I am innocent of the crime laid to my charge. I was only a too true and devoted friend, that is all! I sacrificed my own safety and peace to the welfare of my exalted friends, and I now complain of them that they have treated me unthankfully in this matter. But they must bear the blame, they alone. Let the queen show that she did not give the cardinal a rendezvous in the park of Versailles; let her further show that she did not sign the promissory note, and the letters to his eminence, and then I shall be exposed to the charge of being a deceiver and a traitor. But so long as this is not done—and it cannot be done, for God is just, and will not permit the innocent to suffer for the guilty—so long will all France, yes, all Europe, be convinced that the queen is the guilty one; that she received the jewels, and paid the cardinal for them as a coquette and light-minded woman does, with tender words, with smiles and loving looks, and, last of all, with a rendezvous!"

"You are right," said the attorney-general, as the countess ceased, and looked around her with a victorious smile—"you are quite right, God *is* just, and He will not permit the innocent to suffer for the guilty. He will not let your infernal intrigue stand as truth; He will tear away the mask of innocence from your deceiver's face, and let you stand forth in all your impudence and deception."

"My lord," cried the countess, smiling, "those are very high-sounding words, but they are no proofs."

"We will now give the proofs," answered the attorney-general, turning to one of the guards. "Let the lady enter who is waiting in the room outside."

The officer gave a sign to one of the men who stood near the door leading to the witness-room; he entered the adjoining apartment, but soon after returned alone and whispered something in the officer's ear.

"The lady asks the court's indulgence for a few moments," said the officer, aloud. "As she must be separated some hours from her child, she asks permission to suckle it a few moments."

The president cast an inquiring look at the judges, who all nodded affirmatively.

The law was silent before the voice of Nature; all waited noiselessly till the witness had quieted her child.

And now the door of the witness-room opened, and upon the threshold was seen a woman's figure, at whose unexpected appearance a cry of amazement rose from the lips of all the spectators on the tribune, and all eyes were aflame with curiosity.

It was the queen—no one but the queen who was entering the hall!

It was her slim, fine figure, it was her fresh, young, rosy countenance, with the fair, charming oval of her delicately-tinted cheeks; it was her finely-cut mouth, with the full, lower lips; there were her large, grayish-blue eyes; her high forehead; her beautiful, chestnut-brown hair, arranged in exactly the manner that Leonard, the queen's hair-dresser, was accustomed to dress hers. The rest of her toilet, also, was precisely like that of the queen when she appeared in the gardens of Versailles and dispensed with court etiquette. A bright dress of light linen flowed down in long, broad folds over her beautiful figure; her chest and the full shoulders were covered by a short white robe *à l'enfant*, and on the loftily dressed hair lay a white cap, trimmed with lace.

Yes, it was the queen, as she had often been seen wandering up and down in the broad walks of Versailles; and even the ladies on the tribune, who often enough had seen the monarch close at hand and had spoken with her, looked in astonishment at the entering figure, and whispered, "It is she! The queen herself is coming to give her evidence. What folly, what thoughtlessness!"

While all eyes were directed upon this unexpected figure, no one had thought of the Countess Lamotte-Valois, no one had noticed how she shrank back, and then started from her seat, as if she wanted to fly from the horror which so suddenly confronted her.

No, the officer who stood near her chair had noticed this movement, and with a quick and strong grasp seized her arm.

"What do you want, madame? Why do you rise from your chair after being told to sit still, if you do not want to be chained?"

At the touch of the officer, Lamotte had, as it appeared, regained her whole composure, and had conquered her alarm.

"I rose," she said calmly, "to pay my respects to the Queen of France, like a good subject; but as I see that no one else stands up, and that they allow the queen to enter without rising from their seats, I will take mine again." And the countess slowly sank into her chair.

"Come nearer," cried President de L'Aigre to the royal personage; and she stepped forward, allowing her eyes to wander unconstrainedly through the hall, and then, as she approached the table, behind which the president and the judges sat, greeting them with a friendly nod and smile which caused her lips to part. Again there passed through the hall a wave of amazement, for now, when the lady opened her mouth, the first dissimilarity to the queen appeared. Behind her cherry-red lips there were two rows of poor, broken teeth, with gaps between them, whereas Marie Antoinette had, on account of her faultless teeth, been the object of admiration and envy to all the ladies of her court.

"Who are you, madame, and what are you called?" asked the president.

"Who am I, sir?" replied the lady, with a slight flush. "Good Lord! that is hard to answer. I was a light-minded and idle girl, that did not like to work, but *did* like to live well, and had no objection to dress, and led a tolerably easy life, till one day my heart was surprised by love. After being enamoured of my Sergeant George, I resolved to lead an honorable and virtuous life; and since my little son was born I have tried to be merely a good mother and a good wife. Do you now want to know what I am called? Down to the present time I am called Mademoiselle Oliva. You had me arrested in Brussels and brought here exactly nine days before the appointed time of my marriage with my dear George. He had promised me that our child should be able to regard us as regularly married people, and he wanted to keep his promise, but you prevented him, and it is your fault that my dear little boy was born in prison, and that his father was not there to greet him. But you will confess that I am guilty of no crime, and then you will fulfil my wish, and give me a written certificate of my innocence—that is," she corrected herself, blushing, "of my innocence in this matter, that I may be able to justify myself to my son, when I have to tell him that he was born in prison. It is such a dreadful thing for a mother to have anything that she is ashamed to confess to her child!"

A murmur of applause ran through the hall, and the ladies upon the tribune looked with sympathy upon this fair woman, whose faithful love made her beautiful, and whose mother-feeling gave her dignity.

"So your name is Mademoiselle Oliva?" asked the president.

"Yes, sir, that unfortunately is the name I am called by," answered she, sighing, "but as soon as I leave the prison I shall be married, and then I shall be called Madame George. For my child's sake, you would do me a great kindness now if you would call me madame."

At these *naïve* words a smile lighted up the stern faces of the judges, and sped like a ray of sunlight over all the countenances of the spectators. Even the rigid features of the attorney-general were touched for an instant with the glow; only those of the Countess Lamotte darkened.

"Your majesty plays to-day the *naïve* part of a *paysanne perversée*," cried she, with a hard, shrill voice. "It is well known that your majesty loves to play comedies, and that you are sometimes content with even the minor parts. Now, do not look at me, Mrs. Queen, with such a withering look. Do not forget that you are playing the part of Mademoiselle Oliva, and that you have come secretly from Versailles to save your honor and your diamonds."

"Officer," cried the president, "if the accused allows herself to speak a single word without being asked, lock her up and gag her."

The officer bowed in token of his unconditional obedience, and drew out the wooden gag, which he showed the countess, going straight to her chair.

"I will comply with your wish," said the president, turning to the living portrait of the queen. "I will call you madame, if you will promise me in return to answer all my questions faithfully."

"I promise you that, by my child," answered Mademoiselle Oliva, bowing slightly.

"Tell me, then, do you know the person who sits in that chair?"

Mademoiselle Oliva cast a quick look at Lamotte, who glared at her from her seat.

"Oh, yes, I know her," she said. "That is, I do not know her name, I only know that she lives in a splendid palace, that she is very rich, and has everything nice."

"How do you know this lady? Tell us that."

"I will tell you, gentlemen, and I swear to you that so sure as I want to be an honorable wife, I will tell you the whole truth. I was walking one day in the Palais Royal, when a tall, slim, gentlemanly man, who had passed me several times, came up to me, said some soft things, and asked permission to visit me. I answered him, smiling, that he could visit me at once if he would take me into one of the eating-houses and dine with me. He accepted my proposition, and we dined together, and were merry and jolly enough for a new acquaintance. When we parted we promised to meet there again on the morrow, and so we did. After the second dinner, the amiable gentleman conducted me home, and there told me that he was very distinguished and influential, that he had friends at court, and was very well acquainted with the king and queen. He told me that he would procure for me powerful patrons, and told me that a very distinguished lady, who had interested herself in my behalf through his description, would visit me and make my acquaintance. On the next day he really came in company with a lady, who greeted me very friendly, and was astonished at her first glimpse of me."

"Who was that lady?" asked the president.

Mademoiselle pointed with her thumb over her shoulder.

"The lady yonder," said she.

"Are you sure of it?"

"As of my own life, Mr. President."

"Good. Go on. You saw the lady quite frequently?"

"Yes, she visited me twice more, and told me about the queen, and the splendid way they lived at the court; she promised me that she would bring me to the court and make a great lady out of me, if I would do what she wanted me to do. I promised it gladly, and declared myself ready to do every thing that she should order me, if she would keep her promise and bring me to the court, that I might speak with the king and the queen."

"But why were you so curious to go to the court and speak with the king and the queen?"

"Why? Good Lord! that is very simple and natural. It is a very easy thing for the king to make a captain out of a sergeant, and as the king, so people say, does nothing but what the queen tells him to, I wanted of course before every thing to have a good word from the queen. I should have liked to see my dear George wearing epaulets, and it must have tremendously pleased my boy to have come into the world the child of a captain."

"Did you tell that to the lady?"

"Certainly I told her, and she promised me that the queen would undoubtedly do me the favor, provided that I would do every thing that she bade me do in the name of the queen. She told me, then, that the queen had ordered her to seek a person suitable to play a part in a little comedy, which she was privately preparing; that I was just the person to play this part, and if I would do it well and tell nobody in the world, not even George, when he should come home from Brussels, she would not only give me her help in the future, but pay me fifteen thousand francs for my assistance. I consented with great joy, of course, for fifteen thousand francs was a magnificent dowry for a marriage, and I was very happy in being able to earn so much without having to work very hard for it."

"But did it not occur to you that that was a dangerous game that they wanted you to play, and for which they were going to pay such a high sum?"

"I did have such thoughts once in a while, but I suppressed them soon, so as not to be troubled about my good fortune; and besides that, the countess assured me that every thing was done at the command of the queen, and that it was the queen who was going to pay the fifteen thousand francs. That quieted me completely, for as an obedient and true subject it was my duty to obey the queen, and show devotion to her in all things, more particularly when she was going to pay so magnificently. Meantime, I comforted myself that it could be nothing bad and criminal that the queen could order done, and the countess assured me that too, and told me that every thing I had to do was to represent another person, and to make a lover believe that he was with his love, which would, of course, please him immensely, and make him very happy. Besides, I did not think it any sin to do my part toward making an unfortunate lover have happy thoughts. I was very much pleased with this part, and made my plan to speak to him in very tender and loving tones."

"But were you not curious to know for whom you were playing this part, and what lady you had to represent?"

"I should certainly have liked very much to know, but the countess forbade me to ask, and told me that I must suppress my curiosity; and, on the other hand, make an effort to notice nothing at all, else I should receive only half of the money; and, besides, if they noticed that I knew what I was doing, I might be sent to the Bastile. I was still upon that, and did not trouble myself about any thing further, and asked nothing more, and only thought of learning my lesson well, that I might get the fifteen thousand francs for my marriage portion."

"So they gave you a lesson to learn?"

"Yes, the countess, and the gentleman who brought her to me, came twice to me, and taught me how I ought to walk, how to hold my head, to nod, and reach my hand to kiss. After teaching me this, they came one day and carried me in a splendid coach to the house of the countess. There I dined with them, and then we drove to Versailles. They walked with me in the park, and at a place near the pavilion they stood still, and said to me: 'Here is where you will play your little comedy to-morrow; this is the spot which the queen has herself appointed, and every thing which takes place is at the express command of her majesty.' That entirely quieted me, and I turned back to Paris overjoyed, in company with the countess and her companion. They kept me that night in their beautiful home, and on the next day we drove again to Versailles, where the countess had a small suite of apartments. She herself dressed me, and condescended to help me like a waiting-maid."

"What kind of a suit did she put upon you?"

"Exactly such a one as I am wearing to-day, only when we were ready, and it had begun to grow dark, the countess laid a white mantle over me, and covered my head with a cap. Then she drove me into the park, gave me a letter, and said: 'You will give this letter to a gentleman who will meet us.' We went in silence through the paths and alleys of the park, and I confess that my heart beat right anxiously, and that I had to think a great deal upon the fifteen thousand francs, in order to keep my courage up."

"Did you go with the countess alone, or was some one else with you?"

"The gentleman who first made my acquaintance, and who was, as I believe, the husband of the countess, accompanied us. After we had walked about for a while, he stopped and said: 'Now you must walk alone; I shall, however, be there at the right time to make a noise, and to put the amorous lover to flight.' Then he stepped into the thicket, and we were alone. On this the countess gave me a rose, and said: 'You will give this rose with the letter to the person, and say nothing more than this. You know what that signifies.' The countess made me repeat that three times, and then said: 'You need not add a single word to that. The queen herself has selected these words, and she will hear whether you repeat them correctly, for she will stand behind you, and be a spectator of the whole scene.' On this the countess withdrew, leading me into a thicket, and soon the gentleman came, and I came out of the place of my concealment. After he had made me some very deep reverences, I handed him the rose and the letter, and repeated the very words the countess had taught me. The gentleman sank upon his knee, and kissed the hand which I extended with the rose. At this moment we heard a noise, as if of men's steps approaching, and the countess came running up. 'For God's sake!' she cried, 'we are watched! Quick, quick, come!' and she drew me hurriedly away. We left the garden, and returned to the dwelling of the countess, and there I remained alone, for the countess and her husband said, laughing, that they must go and console the old gentleman for having so short a rendezvous, and for being so quickly disturbed. I asked whether I had done my part well, and the countess said that the queen was very well satisfied with me—that she had stood in the thicket, and had observed all. Early next morning we rode back to Paris, and when we had arrived at their hotel, the countess paid me the fifteen thousand francs all correctly; but she made this condition, that I must go to see my George as soon as possible, and that till I should go, I must remain in a little room in her house. I wrote at once to George and announced my coming, and the time seemed endless till I received his answer, although the countess paid a great deal of attention to me, and always invited me to her *petits soupers*, where we had a right merry time. As soon as the answer had come from my George, who wrote me that he was expecting me, I took my departure in an elegant post-carriage, like a lady; for the countess was not willing that I should travel in a diligence, and her husband had paid in advance for all relays of horses as far as Brussels, so that I had a very agreeable, comfortable ride.

And this, I think, is all that I have to relate, and my son will not have an unquiet night, for I have kept my word, and told every thing truthfully."

"You have nothing to add to this?"

"What could I add to this?" asked Oliva, sighing. "You know as well as I the end of my history. You know, that a fortnight after that little scene at Versailles, I was arrested by police agents in Brussels, and brought to Paris. You know, also, that I swore to take my life if my dear George were not allowed to visit me daily in prison. You know that my dear child was born in prison, and that it is now half a year old, while his poor mother is accused, and not yet gained her freedom. You know that all! What have I that I could add to this? I beg you, let me go and return to my child, for my little George is certainly awake, and his father does not know how to quiet him when he cries."

"You may go to your child," said the president, with a gentle smile. "Officer, conduct Madame Oliva back to the witness-room."

Madame Oliva expressed her thanks for this by throwing a kiss of the hand to the president and the judges, and then hastily followed the officer, who opened the door of the adjoining room. As it swung back, a loud cry of a child was heard, and Madame Oliva, who was standing upon the threshold, turned her fair face back to the president with a triumphant expression, and smiled.

"Did I not tell you so?" she cried. "My son is calling, for he is longing for me. I am coming, my little George, I am coming!"

She sprang forward, and the door closed behind her.

"You have heard the statements of the witness," said the president, addressing Countess Lamotte. "You see now that we have the proof of the ignominious and treacherous intrigues which you have conducted. Will you, in the face of such proofs, still endeavor to deny the facts which have been given in evidence?"

"I have seen neither proofs nor facts," answered Lamotte, scornfully. "I have only been amazed at the self-possession with which the queen goes through her part, and wondered how far her light-mindedness will carry her.

She is truly an adroit player, and she has played the part of Madame Oliva so well, that not a motion nor a tone would have betrayed the queen."

"How, madame?" asked the president, in amazement. "Do you pretend to assert that this witness, who has just left the hall, is not Madame Oliva, but another person? Do you not know that this witness, this living portrait of the queen, has for ten months been detained at the Bastile, and that no change in the person is possible?"

"I only know that the queen has played her part well," said Lamotte, shrugging her shoulders. "She has even gone so far, in her desire to show a difference between Madame Oliva and the queen, as to make a very great sacrifice, and to disclose a secret of her beauty. She has laid aside her fine false teeth, and let us see her natural ones, in order that we may see a difference between the queen and Madame Oliva. Confess only, gentlemen, that it is a rare and comical sight to have a queen so like a courtesan, that you can only distinguish the one from the other by the teeth."

And the countess broke out into scornful laughter, which found a loud echo in some of the veiled ladies in the tribune.

"Moderate your pleasantry, madame," commanded the president. "Remember that you are in a grave and perilous situation, and that justice hangs over you like the sword of Damocles. You have already invoked your fate, in calling God to witness that the innocent shall not suffer for the guilty, and now this word is fulfilled in yourself. The whole edifice of your lies and intrigues crumbles over you, and will cover your head with the dust of eternal infamy."

"I experience nothing of it yet, God be thanked," cried Lamotte, shrugging her shoulders.

"You will be punished for these shameless deeds sooner than you expected," answered the president, solemnly. "You said that you wanted proof that that was not the queen who gave the rendezvous to the cardinal in Versailles; that the promissory note was not subscribed by the queen, and that the letters to the cardinal were not written by her. If the proof of this were to be displayed to you, it would be right to accuse you of high-treason. We have already exhibited the proof that it was not Queen Marie Antoinette who made an appointment with the cardinal in Versailles, but that it was the comedy planned and brought out by yourself, with which you deceived the cardinal, and made him believe that he was going to buy the necklace of which you intended to rob him. It only remains to show you that the subscription of the queen and the letters to the cardinal were forged by you."

"And certainly," cried the countess, "I am very curious to have you exhibit the proofs of this!"

"That is a very simple matter," answered the president, calmly. "We confront you with him who at your direction imitated the handwriting of the queen and wrote the letters. Officer, summon the last witness!"

The officer threw open the door which led to the next room. A breathless silence prevailed in the great hall; every one was intensely eager to see this last witness who was to uncover the web of frauds of the countess's spinning. The great burning eyes of the accused, too, were turned to this door, and her compressed lips and her piercing glance disclosed a little of the anxiety of her soul, although her bearing and manner were still impudent and scornful.

And now the door opened, and a cry of amazement and rage broke from the lips of the countess.

"Retaux de Vilette," cried she madly, doubling up her little hands into fists and extending them toward the man who now entered the hall. "Shameful, shameful! He has turned against me!"

And losing for a moment her composure, she sank back upon the seat from which she had risen in her fright. A deathly paleness covered her cheeks, and, almost swooning, she rested her head on the back of the chair.

"You now see that God is just," said the president, after a brief pause. "Your own conscience testifies against you and compels you to confess yourself guilty."

She sprang up and compelled herself to resume her self-possessed manner, and to appear cool and defiant as before. "No!" she said, "I do not confess myself guilty, and I have no reason to! My heart only shuddered when I saw this man enter, whom I have saved from hunger, overwhelmed with kindness, and whom my enemies have now brought up to make him testify against me! But it is over—I am now ready to see new lies, new infamies heaped upon me: M. Retaux de Vilette may now speak on, his calumnies will only drop from the undented mail of my conscience!"

And with possessed bearing and an air of proud scorn, Countess Lamotte looked at the man who, bowing and trembling, advanced by the side of the officer to the green table, and sedulously shunned meeting the eyes of Lamotte, which rested on him like two fiery daggers.

The president propounded the usual questions as to name and rank. He answered that his name was Retaux de Vilette, and that he was steward and secretary of the Countess Lamotte-Valois. On further questioning, he declared that after the count and the countess had been arrested he had fled, and had gone to Geneva in order to await the end of the trial. But as it lingered so long, he had attempted to escape to England, but had been arrested.

"Why do you wish to escape?" asked the attorney-general.

"Because I feared being involved in the affairs of the Countess Lamotte," answered Retaux de Vilette, in low tones.

"Say rather *you knew* that you would be involved with them. You have at a previous examination deposed circumstantially, and you cannot take back what you testified then, for your denial would be of no avail. Answer, therefore: What have you done? Why were you afraid of being involved in the trial of Countess Lamotte?"

"Because I had done a great wrong," answered Retaux, with vehemence. "Because I had allowed myself to be led astray by the promises, the seductive arts, the deceptions of the countess. I was poor; I lived unseen and unnoticed, and I wished to be rich, honored, and distinguished. The countess promised me all this. She would persuade the cardinal to advance me to honor; she would introduce me to the court, and through her means I should become rich and sought after. I believed all this, and like her devoted slave I did all that she asked of me."

"Slavish soul!" cried the countess, with an expression of unspeakable scorn.

"What did the countess desire of you?" asked the president. "What did you do in her service?"

"I wrote the letters which were intended for the cardinal," answered Retaux de Vilette. "The countess composed them, and I wrote them in the handwriting of the queen."

"How did you know her handwriting?"

"The countess gave me a book in which a letter of the queen's was printed in exact imitation of her hand. I copied the letters as nearly as I could, and so worked out my sentences."

"He lies, he lies!" cried the countess, with a fierce gesture.

"And how was it with the promissory note to the jewellers, Böhmer and Bassenge? Do you know about that?"

"Yes," answered Retaux, with a sigh, "I do know about it, for I wrote it at the direction of the countess, and added the signature."

"Had you a copy?"

"Yes, the signature of the fac-simile."

"In the printed letter was there the subscription which you inserted?"

"No, there was only the name 'Marie Antoinette,' nothing further; but the countess thought that this was only a confidential way of writing her name, as a daughter might use it in a letter to a mother (it was a letter written by the queen to her mother), but that in a document of a more business-like character there must be an official signature. We had a long discussion about it, which resulted in our coming to the conclusion that the proper form would be 'Marie Antoinette of France.' So I practised this several times, and finally wrote it on the promissory note."

"He lies!" cried the countess, stamping on the floor. "He is a born liar and slanderer."

"I am prepared to show the proof at once that I speak the truth," said Retaux de Vilette. "If you will give me writing-materials I will write the signature of the queen in the manner in which it is written on the promissory note."

The president gave the order for the requisite articles to be brought and laid on a side-table. Retaux took the pen, and with a rapid hand wrote some words, which he gave to the officer to be carried to the president.

The latter took the paper and compared it with the words which were written on the promissory note. He then passed the two to the attorney-general, and he to the judge next to him. The papers passed from hand to hand, and, after they came back to the president again, he rose from his seat:

"I believe that the characters on this paper precisely accord with those on the note. The witness has given what seems to me irrefutable testimony that he was the writer of that signature, as well as of the letters to the cardinal. He was the culpable instrument of the criminal Lamotte-Valois. Those of the judges who are of my opinion will rise."

The judges arose as one man.

The countess uttered a loud cry and fell, seized with fearful spasms, to the ground.

"I declare the investigation and hearings ended," said the president, covering his head. "Let the accused and the witnesses be removed, and the spectators' tribune be vacated. We will adjourn to the council-room to prepare the sentence, which will be given to-morrow."

BOOK II.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BAD OMEN

THE day was drawing to a close. That endlessly long day, that 31st of August, 1786, was coming to a conclusion. All Paris had awaited it with breathless excitement, with feverish impatience. No one had been able to attend to his business. The stores were closed, the workshops of the artisans were empty; even in the restaurants and *cafés* all was still; the cooks had nothing to do, and let the fire go out, for it seemed as if all Paris had lost its appetite—as if nobody had time to eat.

And in truth, on this day, Paris had no hunger for food that could satisfy the body. The city was hungry only for news, it longed for food which would satisfy its curiosity.

And the news which would appease its craving was to come from the court-room of the prison! It was to that quarter that Paris looked for the stilling of its hunger, the satisfying of its desires.

The judges were assembled in the hall of the prison to pronounce the decisive sentence in the necklace trial, and to announce to all France, yes, all Europe, whether the Queen of France was innocent in the eyes of God and His representatives on earth, or whether a shade of suspicion was thenceforth to rest upon that lofty brow!

At a very early hour of the morning, half-past five, the judges of the high court of Parliament, forty-nine in number, gathered at the council-room in order to pronounce sentence.

At the same early hour, an immense, closely-thronged crowd gathered in the broad square in front of the prison, and gazed in breathless expectation at the great gate of the building, hoping every minute that the judges would come out, and that they should learn the sentence.

But the day wore on, and still the gates remained shut; no news came from the council-room to enlighten the curiosity of the crowd that filled the square and the adjacent streets.

Here and there the people began to complain, and loud voices were heard grumbling at the protracted delay, the long deliberations of the judges. Here and there faces were seen full of scornful defiance, full of laughing malice, working their way through the crowd, and now and then dropping stinging words, which provoked to still greater impatience. All the orators of the clubs and of the secret societies were there among the crowd, all the secret and open enemies of the queen had sent their instruments thither to work upon the people with poisonous words and mocking observations, and to turn public opinion in advance against the queen, even in case the judges did not condemn her; that is, if they did not declare the cardinal innocent of conspiracy against the sovereign, and contempt of the majesty of the queen.

It was known that in his *résumé*, the attorney-general had alluded to the punishment of the cardinal. That was the only news which had worked its way out of the courtroom. Some favored journalist, or some friend of the queen, had heard this; it spread like the wind all over Paris, and in thousands upon thousands of copies the words of the attorney-general were distributed.

His address purported to run as follows: that "Cardinal de Rohan is indicted on the accusation, and must answer the Parliament and the attorney-general respecting the following charges: of audaciously mixing himself up with the affairs of the necklace, and still more audaciously in supposing that the queen would make an appointment with him by night; and that for this he would ask the pardon of the king and the queen in presence of the whole court. Further, the cardinal is enjoined to lay down his office as grand almoner within a certain time, to remove to a certain distance from the royal residence and not to visit the places where the royal family may be living, and lastly, to remain in prison till the complete termination of the trial."

The friends and dependants of the cardinal, the enemies and persecutors of the queen, received this decision of the attorney-general with vexation and anger; they found fault with the servility of the man who would suffer the law to bow before the throne; they made dishonorable remarks and calumnious innuendoes about the queen, who, with her coquetry and the amount received from the jewels, had gained over the judges, and who would perhaps have appointed a rendezvous with every one of them in order to gain him over to her side.

"Even if the judges clear her," cried the sharp voice of Marat from the heart of the crowd, "the people will pass sentence upon her. The people are always right; the people cannot be bribed—they are like God in this; and the people will not disown their verdict before the beautiful eyes and the seductive smiles of the Austrian woman. The people will not be made fools of; they will not believe in the story of the counterfeited letters and the forged signature."

"No," shouted the crowd, laughing in derision, "we will not believe it. The queen wrote the letters; her majesty understands how to write love-letters!"

"The queen loves to have a hand in all kinds of nonsense," thundered the brewer Santerre, in another group. "She wanted to see whether a pretty girl from the street could play the part of the Queen of France, and at the same time she wanted to avenge herself upon the cardinal because she knew that he once found fault with her before her mother the empress, on account of her light and disreputable behavior, and the bad manners which, as the dauphiness, she would introduce into this court. Since then she has with her glances, her smiles, and her apparent anger, so worked upon the cardinal as to make him fall over ears in love with the beautiful, pouting queen. And that was just what she wanted, for now she could avenge herself. She appointed a rendezvous with the cardinal, and while she secretly looked on the scene in the thicket, she allowed the pretty Mademoiselle Oliva to play her part. And you see that it is not such a difficult thing to represent a queen, for Mademoiselle Oliva performed her part so well that the cardinal was deceived, and took a girl from the streets to be the Queen of France."

"Oh, better times are coming, better times are coming!" cried Simon the cobbler, who was close by, with his coarse laugh. "The cardinal took a girl from the streets for the Queen of France; but wait a little and we shall see the time when she will have to sweep the streets with a broom, that the noble people may walk across with dry feet!"

In the loud laugh with which the crowd greeted this remark of the cobbler, was mingled one single cry of anger, which, however, was overborne by the rough merriment of the mass. It came from the lips of a man in simple citizen's costume, who had plunged into the mob and worked his way forward with strong arms, in order to reach a place as near as possible to the entrance-door of the prison, and to be among the first to learn the impending sentence.

No one, as just said, had heard this cry; no one had troubled himself about this young man, with the bold defiant face, who, with shrugged shoulders, was listening to the malicious speeches which were uttered all around him, and who replied to them all with flaming looks of anger, pressing his lips closely together, in order to hold back the words which could hardly be suppressed.

He succeeded at last in reaching the very door of the prison, and stood directing his eyes thither with gloomy looks of curiosity.

His whole soul lay in this look; he heard nothing of the mocking speeches which echoed around him; he saw nothing of what took place about him. He saw only this fatal door; he only heard the noises which proceeded from within the prison.

At last, after long waiting, and when the sun had set, the door opened a little, and a man came out. The people who, at his appearance, had broken into a loud cry of delight, were silent when it was seen that it was not the officer who would announce the verdict with his stentorian voice, but that it was only one of the ordinary servants of the court, who had been keeping watch at the outer gate.

This man ascended with an indifferent air the steps of the staircase, and to the loud questions which were hurled at him by the crowd, whether the cardinal were declared innocent, he answered quietly, "I do not know. But I think the officer will soon make his appearance. My time is up, and I am going home, for I am half dead with hunger and thirst."

"Let the poor hungry man go through," cried the young man, pressing up to him. "Only see how exhausted he is. Come, old fellow, give me your hand; support yourself on me."

And he took the man by the arm, and with his powerful elbows forced a way through the crowd. The people let them pass, and directed their attention again to the door of the prison.

"The verdict is pronounced?" asked the young man, softly.

"Yes, Mr. Toulan," he whispered, "the councillor gave me just now, as I was handing him a glass of water, the paper on which he had written it."

"Give it to me, John, but so that nobody can see; otherwise they will suspect what the paper contains, and they will all grab at it and tear it in bits."

The servant slid, with a quick motion, a little folded paper into the hand of the young man, who thanked him for it with a nod and a smile, and then quickly dropped his arm, and forced his way in another direction through the crowd. Soon, thanks to his youth and his skill, he had worked through the dense mass; then with a flying step he sped through the street next to the square, then more swiftly still through the side streets and alleys, till he reached the gate that led out to the street of Versailles. Outside of this there was a young man in a blue blouse, who, in an idle and listless manner, was leading a bridled horse up and down the road.

"Halloo, Richard, come here!" cried the young man.

"Ah! Mr. Toulan," shouted the lad in the blouse, running up with the horse. "You have come at last, Mr. Toulan. I have been already waiting eight hours for you."

"I will give you a franc for every hour," said Mr. Toulan, swinging himself into the saddle. "Now go home, Richard, and greet my sweetheart, if you see her."

He gave his horse a smart stroke, pressed the spurs into his flanks, and the powerful creature sped like an arrow from a bow along the road to Versailles.

In Versailles, too, and in the royal palace, this day had been awaited with anxious expectations. The king, after ending his daily duties with his ministers, had gone to his workshop in order to work with his locksmith, Girard, upon a new lock, whose skilful construction was an invention of the king.

The queen, too, had not left her room the whole day, and even her friend, the Duchess Julia de Polignac, had not been able to cheer up the queen by her pleasant talk.

At last, when she saw that all her efforts were vain, and that nothing could dissipate the sadness of the queen, the duchess had made the proposition to go to Trianon, and there to call together the circle of her intimate friends.

But the queen sorrowfully shook her head, and gazed at the duchess with a troubled look.

"You speak of the circle of my friends," she said. "Ah! the circle of those whom I considered my friends is so rent and broken, that scarcely any torn fragments of it remain, and I fear to bring them together again, for I know that what once is broken cannot be mended again."

"And so does your majesty not believe in your friends any more?" asked the duchess, reproachfully. "Do you doubt us? Do you doubt me?"

"I do not doubt you all, and, before all things else, not *you*," said Marie Antoinette, with a lingering, tender look. "I only doubt the possibility of a queen's having faithful friends. I always forgot, when I was with my friends, that I was the queen, but they never forgot it."

"Madame, they ought never to forget it," replied the duchess, softly. "With all their love for your majesty, your friends ought never to forget that reverence is due you as much as love, and subjection as much as friendship. They ought never to make themselves your majesty's equals; and if your majesty, in the grace of your fair and gentle heart, designs to condescend to us and make yourself like us, yet we ought never to be so thoughtless as to raise ourselves to you, and want to make ourselves the equals of our queen."

"Oh, Julia! you pain me—you pain me unspeakably," sighed Marie Antoinette, pressing her hand to her heart, as if she wanted to keep back the tears which would mount into her eyes.

"Your majesty knows," continued the duchess, with her gentle, and yet terribly quiet manner, "your majesty knows how modestly I make use of the great confidence which you most graciously bestow upon me; how seldom and how tremblingly my lips venture to utter the dear name of my queen, of whom I may rightly talk only in intimate converse with your exalted mother and your royal husband. Your majesty knows further—"

"Oh! I know all, all," interrupted the queen, sadly. "I know that it is not the part of a queen to be happy, to love, to be loved, to have friends. I know that you all, whom I have so tenderly loved, feel yourselves more terrified than benefited; I know, that with this confession, happiness has withdrawn from me. I look into the future and see the dark clouds which are descending, and threatening us with a tempest. I see all; I have no illusions more. The fair days are all past—the sunshine of Trianon, and the fragrance of its flowers."

"And will your majesty not go there to-day?" asked the duchess. "It is such beautiful weather, the sun shines so splendidly, and we shall have such a glorious sunset."

"A glorious sunset!" repeated Marie Antoinette, with a bitter smile. "A queen is at least allowed to see the sun go down; etiquette has not forbidden a queen to see the sun set and night approach. But the poor creature is not allowed to see the sun rise, and rejoice in the beauty of the dawn. I have once, since I was a queen, seen the sun rise, and all the world cried 'Murder,' and counted it a crime, and all France laughed at the epigrams and jests with which my friends punished me for the crime that the queen of France, with her court, had seen the sun rise. And now you want to allow me to see it set, but I will not; I will not look at this sad spectacle of coming night. In me it is night, and I feel the storms which are drawing nigh. Go, Julia, leave me alone, for you can see that there is nothing to be done with me to-day. I cannot laugh, I cannot be merry. Go, for my sadness might infect you, and that would make me doubly sad."

The duchess did not reply; she only made a deep reverence, and went with light, inaudible step over the carpet to the door. The queen's face had been turned away, but as the light sound of the door struck her ear, she turned quickly around and saw that she was alone.

"She has left me—she has really gone," sighed the queen, bitterly. "Oh! she is like all the rest, she never loved me. But who does love me?" asked she, in despair. "Who is there in the world that loves me, and forgets that I am the queen? My God! my heart cries for love, yearns for friendship, and has never found them. And they make this yearning of mine a crime; they accuse me that I have a heart. O my God! have pity upon me. Veil at least my eyes, that I may not see the faithlessness of my friends. Sustain at least my faith in the friendship of my Julia. Let me not have the bitterness of feeling that I am alone, inconsolably alone."

She pressed her hands before her face, and sank upon a chair, and sat long there, motionless, and wholly given over to her sad, bitter feelings.

After a long time she let her hands fall from her face, and looked around with a pained, confused look. The sun had gone down, it began to grow dark, and Marie Antoinette shuddered within herself.

"By this time the sentence has been pronounced," she muttered, softly. "By this time it is known whether the Queen of France can be slandered and insulted with impunity. Oh! if I only could be sure. Did not Campan say—I will go to Campan." And the queen rose quickly, went with a decisive step out of her cabinet; then through the toilet-room close by, and opened the door which led to the chamber of her first lady-in-waiting, Madame de Campan.

Madame de Campan stood at the window, and gazed with such a look of intense expectation out into the twilight, that she did not notice the entrance of the queen till the latter called her loudly by name.

"The queen!" cried she, drawing back terrified from the window. "The queen! and—here, in my room!"

Marie Antoinette made a movement of impatience. "You want to say that it is not becoming for a queen to enter the room of her trusted waiting-maid, that it is against etiquette. I know that indeed, but these are days, my good Campan, when etiquette has no power over us, and when, behind the royal purple, the poor human heart, in all its need, comes into the foreground. This is such a day for me, and as I know you are true, I have come to you. Did you not tell me, Campan, that you should receive the news as soon as the sentence was pronounced?"

"Yes, your majesty, I do hope to, and that is the reason why I am standing at the window looking for my messenger."

"How curious!" said the queen, thoughtfully. "They call me Queen of France, and yet I have no one who hastens to give me news of this important affair, while my waiting-maid has devoted friends, who do for her what no one does for the queen."

"I beg your majesty's pardon," answered Madame de Campan, smiling. "What they do to-day for me, they do only because I am the waiting-maid of the queen. I was yesterday at Councillor Bugeaud's, in order to pay my respects to the family after a long interval, for his wife is a cousin of mine."

"That means," said the queen, with a slight smile, "that you went there, not to visit your cousin, the councillor's wife, but to visit the councillor himself. Now confess, my good Campan, you wanted to do a little bribery."

"Well, I confess to your majesty, I wanted to see if it was really true that Councillor Bugeaud has gone over to the enemy. Your majesty knows that Madame de Marsan has visited all the councillors, and adjured them by God and the Holy Church, not to condemn the cardinal, but to declare him innocent."

"That is, they will free the cardinal that I may be condemned," said the queen, angrily. "For to free him is the same as to accuse me and have my honor tarnished."

"That was what I was saying to my cousin, Councillor Bugeaud, and happily I found supporters in his own family. Oh, I assure your majesty that in this family there are those who are devoted, heart and soul, to your majesty."

"Who are these persons?" asked the queen. "Name them to me, that in my sad hours I may remember them."

"There is, in the first place, the daughter of the councillor, the pretty Margaret, who is so enthusiastic for your majesty that she saves a part of her meagre pocket-money that she may ride over to Versailles at every great festival to see your majesty; and then particularly there is the lover of this little person, a young man named Toulan, a gifted, fine young fellow, who almost worships your majesty—he is the one who promised me to bring news at once after the sentence is pronounced, and it is more owing to his eloquence than to mine that Councillor Bugeaud saw the necessity of giving his vote against the cardinal and putting himself on the right side."

At this instant the door which led into the antechamber was hastily flung open, and a lackey entered.

"The gentleman whom you expected has just arrived," he announced.

"It is Mr. Toulan," whispered Madame de Campan to the queen; "he brings the sentence. Tell the gentleman," she then said aloud to the lackey, "to wait a moment in the antechamber; I will receive him directly. Go, I beg your majesty," she continued as the lackey withdrew, "I beg your majesty to graciously allow me to receive the young man here."

"That is to say, my dear Campan," said the queen, smiling, "to vacate the premises and leave the apartment. But I am not at all inclined to, I prefer to remain here. I want to see this young man of whom you say that he is such a faithful friend, and then I should like to know the news as soon as possible that he brings. See here, the chimney-screen is much taller than I, and if I go behind, the young man will have no suspicion of my presence, especially as it is dark. Now let him come in. I am most eager to hear the news."

The queen quickly stepped behind the high screen, and Madame Campan opened the door of the antechamber.

"Come in, Mr. Toulan," she cried, and at once there appeared at the open door the tall, powerful figure of the young man. His cheeks were heated with the quick ride, his eyes glowed, and his breathing was rapid and hard.

Madame Campan extended her hand to him and greeted him with a friendly smile. "So you have kept your word, Mr. Toulan," she said. "You bring me the news of the court's decision?"

"Yes, madame, I do," he answered softly, and with a touch of sadness. "I am only sorry that you have had to wait so long, but it is not my fault. It was striking eight from the tower of St. Jacques when I received the news."

"Eight," asked Madame de Campan, looking at the clock, "it is now scarcely nine. You do not mean to say that you have ridden the eighteen miles from Paris to Versailles in an hour?"

"I have done it, and I assure you that is nothing wonderful. I had four fresh horses stationed along the road, and they were good ones. I fancied myself sometimes a bird flying through the air, and it seems to me now as if I had flown. I beg your pardon if I sit down in your presence, for my feet tremble a little."

"Do sit down, my dear young friend," cried Campan, and she hastened herself to place an easy-chair for the young man.

"Only an instant," he said, sinking into it. "But believe me it is not the quick ride that makes my feet tremble, but joy and excitement. I shall perhaps have the pleasure to have done the queen a little service, for you told me that it would be very important for her majesty to learn the verdict as quickly as possible, and no one has got here before me, has there?"

"No, my friend, the queen will learn the news first through your means, and I shall say to her majesty that I have learned it through you."

"No, madame," he cried, quickly, "no, I would much rather you would not tell the queen, for who knows whether the news is good, or whether it would not trouble the noble heart of the queen, and then my name, if she should learn it, would only be disagreeable to her—rather that she should never hear it than that it should be connected with unpleasant associations to her."

"Then you do not know what the sentence is?" replied Campan, astonished. "Have you come to bring me the sentence, and yet do not know yourself what it is?"

"I do not know what it is, madame. The councillor, the father of my sweetheart, has sent it by me in writing, and I have not allowed myself to take time to read it. Perhaps, too, I was too cowardly for it, for if I had seen that it contained any thing that would trouble the queen, I should not have had courage to come here and deliver the paper to you. So I did not read it, and thought only of this, that I might perhaps save the queen a quarter of an hour's disquiet and anxious expectation. Here, madame, is the paper which contains the sentence. Take it to her majesty, and may the God of justice grant that it contain nothing which may trouble the queen!"

He stood up, and handed Madame de Campan a paper. "And now, madame," he continued, "allow me to retire, that I may return to Paris, for my sweetheart is expecting me, and, besides, they are expecting some disturbance in the city. I must go, therefore, to protect my house."

"Go, my young friend," said Madame de Campan, warmly pressing his hand. "Receive my heartiest thanks for your devotion, and be sure the queen shall hear of it. Farewell, farewell!"

"No," cried Marie Antoinette, emerging from behind the screen with a laugh, "no, do not go, sir! Remain to receive your queen's thanks for the disinterested zeal which you have displayed for me this day."

"The queen!" whispered Toulan, turning pale, "the queen!"

And falling upon his knee he looked at the queen with such an expression of rapture and admiration that Marie Antoinette was touched.

"I have much to thank you for, Mr. Toulan," she said. "Not merely that you are the bearer of important news—I thank you besides for convincing me that the Queen of France has faithful and devoted friends, and to know this is so cheering to me that even if you bring me bad news, my sorrow will be softened by this knowledge. I thank you again, Mr. Toulan!"

Toulan perceived that the queen was dismissing him; he stood up and retreated to the door, his eyes fixed on the queen, and then, after opening the door, he sank, as it were, overcome by the storm of his emotions, a second time upon his knee, and folding his hands, raised his great, beaming eyes to heaven.

"God in heaven," he said loudly and solemnly, "I thank Thee for the joy of this hour. From this moment I devote myself to the service of my queen. She shall henceforth be the divinity whom I serve, and to whom I will, if I can avail any thing, freely offer my blood and life. This I swear, and God and the queen have heard my oath!"

And without casting another glance at the queen, without saluting her, Toulan rose and softly left the room, tightly closing the door after him.

"Singular," murmured the queen, "really singular. When he took the oath a shudder passed through my soul, and something seemed to say to me that I should some time be very unhappy, and that this young man should then be near me."

"Your majesty is excited to-day, and so every thing seems to have a sad meaning," said Madame de Campan, softly.

"But the sentence, the sentence!" cried the queen. "Give me the paper, I will read it myself."

Madame de Campan hesitated. "Would your majesty not prefer to receive it in the presence of the king, and have it read by his majesty?"

"No, no, Campan. If it is favorable, I shall have pleasure in carrying the good news to the king. If it is unfavorable, then I can collect myself before I see him."

"But it is so dark here now that it will be impossible to read writing."

"You are right, let us go into my sitting-room," said the queen. "The candles must be lighted there already. Come, Campan, since I am indebted to you for this early message, you shall be the first to learn it. Come, Campan, go with me!"

With a quick step the queen returned to her apartments, and entered her sitting-room, followed by Madame de Campan, whose countenance was filled with sad forebodings.

The queen was right; the candles had already been lighted in her apartments, and diffused a light like that of day throughout her large sitting-room. In the little porcelain cabinet, however, there was a milder light, as Marie Antoinette liked to have it when she was alone and *sans* *cérémonial.* The candles on the main chandelier were not lighted, and on the table of Sèvres china and rosewood which stood before the divan were two silver candlesticks, each with two wax candles. These four were the only lights in the apartment.

"Now, Campan," said the queen, sinking into the armchair which stood before the table, near the divan, "now give me the paper. But no, you would better read it to me—but exactly as it stands. You promise me that?"

"Your majesty has commanded, and I must obey," said Campan, bowing.

"Read, read," urged Marie Antoinette. "Let me know the sentence."

Madame de Campan unfolded the paper, and went nearer to the light in order to see better. Marie Antoinette leaned forward, folded both hands in her lap, and looked at Campan with an expression of eager expectation.

"Read, read!" she repeated, with trembling lips.

Madame de Campan bowed and read:

"First.—The writing, the basis of the trial, the note and signatures, are declared to be forged in imitation of the queen's hand.

"Second.—Count Lamotte is sentenced in contumacion to the galleys for life.

"Third.—The woman Lamotte to be whipped, marked on both shoulders with the letter O, and to be confined for life.

"Fourth.—Retaux de Vilette to be banished for life from France.

"Fifth.—Mademoiselle Oliva is discharged.

"Sixth.—The lord cardinal—"

"Well," cried the queen, passionately, "why do you stammer, why do you tremble? He has been discharged; I know it already, for we are already at the names of the acquitted. Read on, Campan."

And Madame de Campan read on:

"The lord cardinal is acquitted from every charge, and is allowed to publish this acquittal."

"Acquitted!" cried the queen, springing from her seat, "acquitted! Oh, Campan, what I feared is true. The Queen of France has become the victim of cabals and intrigues. The Queen of France in her honor, dignity, and virtue, is injured and wounded by one of her own subjects, and there is no punishment for him; he is free. Pity me, Campan! But no, on the contrary, I pity you, I pity France! If I can have no impartial judges in a matter which darkens my character, what can you, what can all others hope for, when you are tried in a matter which touches your happiness and honor?* I am sad, sad in my inmost soul, and it seems to me as if this instant were to overshadow my whole life; as if the shades of night had fallen upon me, and—what is that? Did you blow out the light, Campan?"

"Your majesty sees that I am standing entirely away from the lights."

"But only see," cried the queen, "one of the candles is put out!"

"It is true," said Madame de Campan, looking at the light, over which a bluish cloud was yet hovering. "The light is put out, but if your majesty allows me, I—"

She was silent, and her bearing assumed the appearance of amazement and horror.

The candle which had been burning in the other arm of the candlestick went out like the one before.

The queen said not a word. She gazed with pale lips and wide-opened eyes at both the lights, the last spark of which had just disappeared.

"Will your majesty allow me to light the candles again?" asked Madame de Campan, extending her hand to the candlestick.

But the queen held her hand fast. "Let them be," she whispered, "I want to see whether both the other lights—"

Suddenly she was convulsed, and, rising slowly from her arm-chair, pointed with silent amazement at the second candlestick.

One of the two other lights had gone out.

Only one was now burning, and dark shadows filled the cabinet. The one light faintly illumined only the centre, and shone with its glare upon the pale, horrified face of the queen.

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* The very words of the queen. See "Mémoires de Madame de Campan," vol. ii., p. 23.

"Campan," she whispered, raising her arm, and pointing at the single light which remained burning, "if this fourth light goes out like the other three, it is a bad omen for me, and forebodes the approach of misfortune."

At this instant the light flared up and illumined the room more distinctly, then its flame began to die away.

One flare more and this light went out, and a deep darkness reigned in the cabinet.

The queen uttered a loud, piercing cry, and sank in a swoon.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEFORE THE MARRIAGE.

THE wedding guests were assembled. Madame Bugeaud had just put the veil upon the head of her daughter Margaret, and impressed upon her forehead the last kiss of motherly love. It was the hour when a mother holds her daughter as a child in her arms for the last time, bids adieu to the pleasant pictures of the past, and sends her child from her parents' house to go out into the world and seek a new home. Painful always is such an hour to a mother's heart, for the future is uncertain; no one knows any thing about the new vicissitudes that may arise.

And painful, too, to the wife of Councillor Bugeaud was this parting from her dearly-loved daughter, but she suppressed her deep emotion, restrained the tears in her heart, that not one should fall upon the bridal wreath of her loved daughter. Tears dropped upon the bridal wreath are the heralds of coming misfortune, the seal of pain which destiny stamps upon the brow of the doomed one.

And the tender mother would so gladly have taken away from her loved Margaret every pain and every misfortune! The times were threatening, and the horizon of the present was so full of stormy signs that it was necessary to look into the future with hope.

"Go, my daughter," said Madame Bugeaud, with a smile, regarding which only God knew how much it cost the mother's heart—"go out into your new world, be happy, and may you never regret the moment when you left the threshold of your father's house to enter a new home!"

"My dear mother," cried Margaret, with beaming eyes, "the house to which I am going is the house of him I love, and my new home is his heart, which is noble, great, and good, and in which all the treasures in the earth for me rest."

"God grant, my daughter, that you may after many years be able to repeat those words!"

"I shall repeat them, mother, for in my heart is a joyful trust. I can never be unhappy, for Toulan loves me. But, hark! I hear him coming; it is his step, and listen! he is calling me!"

And the young girl, with reddening cheeks, directed her glowing eyes to the door, which just then opened, where appeared her lover, in a simple, dark, holiday-suit, with a friendly, grave countenance, his tender, beaming eyes turned toward his affianced.

He hastened to her, and kissed the little trembling hand which was extended to him.

"All the wedding guests are ready, my love. The carriages are waiting, and as soon as we enter the church the clergyman will advance to the altar to perform the ceremony."

"Then let us go, Louis," said Margaret, nodding to him, and arm-in-arm they went to the door.

But Toulan held back. "Not yet, my dear one. Before we go to the church, I want to have a few words with you."

"That is to say, my dear sir, that you would like to have me withdraw," said the mother, with a smile. "Do not apologize, my son, that is only natural, and I dare not be jealous. My daughter belongs to you, and I have no longer the right to press into your secrets. So I will withdraw, and only God may hear what the lover has to say to his affianced before the wedding."

She nodded in friendly fashion to the couple, and left the room.

"We are now alone, my Margaret," said Toulan, putting his arm around the neck of the fair young maiden, and drawing her to himself. "Only God is to hear what I have to say to you."

"I hope, Louis," whispered the young girl, trembling, "I hope it is not bad news that you want to tell me. Your face is so grave, your whole look so solemn. You love me still, Louis?"

"Yes, Margaret, I do love you," answered he, softly; "but yet, before you speak the word which binds you to me forever, I must open my whole heart to you, and you must know all I feel, in order that, if there is a future to prove us, we may meet it with fixed gaze and joyful spirit."

"My God! what have I to hear?" whispered the young girl, pressing her hand to her heart, that began to beat with unwonted violence.

"You will have to hear, my Margaret, that I love you, and yet that the image of another woman is cherished in my heart."

"Who is this other woman?" cried Margaret.

"Margaret, it is Queen Marie Antoinette."

The girl breathed freely, and laughed. "Ah! how you frightened me, Louis. I was afraid you were going to name a rival, and now you mention her whom I, too, love and honor, to whom I pay my whole tribute of admiration, and who, although you ought to live there alone, has a place in my heart. I shall never be jealous of the queen. I love her just as devotedly as you do."

A light, sympathetic smile played upon the lips of Toulan. "No, Margaret," said he, gravely, "you do not love her as I do, and you cannot, for your duty to her is not like mine. Listen, my darling, and I will tell you a little story—a story which is so sacred to me that it has never passed over my lips, although, according to the ways of human thinking, there is nothing so very strange about it. Come, my dear, sit down with me a little while, and listen to me."

He led the maiden to the little divan, and took a place with her upon it. Her hand lay within his, and with a joyful and tender look she gazed into the bold, noble, and good face of the man to whom she was ready to devote her whole life.

"Speak now, Louis, I will listen!"

"I want to tell you of my father, Margaret," said the young man, with a gentle voice—"of my father, who thirsted and hungered for me, in his efforts to feed, clothe, and educate me. He had been an officer in the army, had distinguished himself in many a battle, was decorated, on account of his bravery, with the Order of St. Louis, and discharged as an invalid. That was a sad misfortune for my father, for he was poor, and his officer's pay was his only fortune. But no—he had a nobler, a fairer fortune—he had a wife whom he passionately loved, a little boy whom he adored. And now the means of existence were taken away from this loved wife, this dear boy, and from him whose service had been the offering of his life for his king and country, the storming of fortifications, the defying of the bayonets of enemies; and who in this service had been so severely wounded, that his life was saved only by the amputation of his right arm. Had it not been just this right arm, he would have been able to do something for himself, and to have found some employment in the government service. But now he was robbed of all hope of employment; now he saw for himself and his family only destruction, starvation! But he could not believe it possible; he held it to be impossible that the king should allow his bold soldier, his knight of the Order of St. Louis, to die of hunger, after becoming a cripple in his service. He resolved to go to Paris, to declare his need to the king, and to implore the royal bounty. This journey was the last hope of the family, and my father was just entering on it when my mother sickened and died. She was the prop, the right arm of my father; she was the nurse, the teacher of his poor boy; now he had no hope more, except in the favor of the king and in death. The last valuables were sold, and father and son journeyed to Paris: an invalid whose bravery had cost him an arm, and whose tears over a lost wife had nearly cost him his eyesight, and a lad of twelve years, acquainted only with pain and want from his birth, and in whose heart, notwithstanding, there was an inextinguishable germ of hope, spirit, and joy. We went on foot, and when my shoes were torn with the long march, my feet swollen and bloody, my father told me to climb upon his back and let him carry me. I would not allow it, suppressed my pain, and went on till I dropped in a swoon."

"Oh!" cried Margaret, with tears in her eyes, "how much you have suffered; and I am learning it now for the first time, and you never told me this sad history."

"I forgot every thing sad when I began to love you, Margaret, and I did not want to trouble you with my stories. Why should we darken the clear sky of the present with the clouds of the past? the future will unquestionably bring its own clouds. I tell you all this now, in order that you may understand my feelings. Now hear me further, Margaret! At last, after long-continued efforts, we reached Versailles, and it seemed to us as if all suffering and want were taken away from us when we found ourselves in a dark, poor inn, and lay down on the hard beds. On the next, my father put on his uniform, decorated his breast with the order of St. Louis, and, as the pain in his eyes prevented his going alone, I had to accompany him. We repaired to the palace and entered the great gallery which the court daily traversed on returning from mass in the royal apartments. My father, holding in his hand the petition which I had written to his dictation, took his place near the door through which the royal couple must pass. I stood near him and looked with curious eyes at the brilliant throng which filled the great hall, and at the richly-dressed gentlemen who were present and held petitions in their hands, in spite of their cheerful looks and their fine clothes. And these gentlemen crowded in front of my father, shoved him to the wall, hid him from the eye of the king, who passed through the hall at the side of the queen, and with a pleasant face received all the petitions which were handed to him. Sadly we turned home, but on the following day we repaired to the gallery again, and I had the courage to crowd back some of the elegantly-dressed men who wanted to press before my father, and to secure for him a place in the front row. I was rewarded for my boldness. The king came, and with a gracious smile took the petition from the hand of my father, and laid it in the silver basket which the almoner near him carried."

"Thank God," cried Margaret, with a sigh of relief, "thank God, you were saved!"

"That we said too, Margaret, and that restored my father's hope and made him again happy and well. We went the next day to the gallery. The king appeared, the grand almoner announced the names of those who were to receive answers to their petitions—the name of my father was not among them! But we comforted ourselves with the thought, it was not possible to receive answers so quickly, and on the next day we went to the gallery again, and so on for fourteen successive days, but all in vain; the name of my father was never called. Still we went every day to the gallery and took our old place there, only the countenance of my father was daily growing paler, his step weaker, and his poor boy more trustless and weak. We had no longer the means of stilling our hunger, we had consumed every thing, and my father's cross of St. Louis was our last possession. But that we dared not part with, for it was our passport to the palace, it opened to us the doors of the great gallery, and there was still one last hope. 'We go to-morrow for the last time,' said my father to me on the fifteenth day. 'If it should be in vain on the morrow, then I shall sell my cross, that you, Louis, may not need to be hungry any more, and then may God have mercy upon us!' So we went the next day to the gallery again. My father was to-day paler than before, but he held his head erect; he fixed his eye, full of an expression of defiance and scorn, upon the talkative, laughing gentlemen around him, who strutted in their rich clothes, and overlooked the poor chevalier who stood near them, despised and alone.. In my poor boy's heart there was a fearful rage against these proud, supercilious men, who thought themselves so grand because they wore better clothes, and because they had distinguished acquaintances and relations, and yet were no more than my father—no more than suppliants and petitioners; tears of anger and of grief filled my eyes, and the depth of our poverty exasperated my soul against the injustice of fate. All at once the whispering and talking ceased,—the king and the queen had entered the gallery. The king advanced to the middle of the hall, the grand almoner called the names, and the favored ones approached the king, to receive from him the fulfilment of their wishes, or at least keep their hope alive. Near him stood the young queen, and while she was conversing with some gentlemen of the court, her beautiful eyes glanced over to us, and lingered upon the noble but sad form of my father. I had noticed that on previous days, and every time it seemed to me as if a ray from the sun had warmed my poor trembling heart—as if new blossoms of hope were putting forth in my soul. To-day this sensation, when the queen looked at us, was more intense than before. My father looked at the king and whispered softly, 'I see him to-day for the last time!' But I saw only the queen, and while I pressed the cold, moist hand of my father to my lips, I whispered, 'Courage, dear father, courage! The queen has seen us.' She stopped short in her conversation with the gentleman and advanced through the hall with a quick, light step directly to us; her large gray-blue eyes beamed with kindness, a heavenly smile played around her rosy lips, her cheeks were flushed with feeling; she was simply dressed, and yet there floated around her an atmosphere of grace and nobleness. 'My dear chevalier,' said she, and her voice rang like the sweetest music, 'my dear chevalier, have you given a petition to the king?' 'Yes, madame,' answered my father trembling, 'fourteen days ago I presented a petition to the king.' 'And have you received no answer yet?' she asked quickly. 'I see you every day here with the lad there, and conclude you are still hoping for an answer.' 'So it is, madame,' answered my father, 'I expect an answer, that is I expect a decision involving my life or death.' 'Poor man!' said the queen, with a tone of deep sympathy. 'Fourteen days of such waiting must be dreadful! I pity you sincerely. Have you no one to present your claims?' 'Madame,' answered my father, 'I have no one else to present my claims than this empty sleeve which lacks a right arm—no other protection than the justice of my cause.' 'Poor man!' sighed the queen, 'you must know the world very little if you believe that this is enough. But, if you allow me, I will undertake your protection, and be your intercessor with the king. Tell me your name and address.' My father gave them, the queen listened attentively and smiled in friendly fashion. 'Be here to-morrow at this hour—I myself will bring you the king's answer.' We left the palace with new courage, with new hope. We felt no longer that we were tired and hungry, and heeded not the complaints of our host, who declared that he had no more patience, and that he would no longer give us credit for the miserable chamber which we had. His scolding and threatening troubled us that day no more. We begged him to have patience with us till to-morrow. We told him our hopes for the future, and we rejoiced in our own cheerful expectations. At length the next day arrived, the hour of the audience came, and we repaired to the great gallery. My heart beat so violently that I could feel it upon my lips, and my father's face was lighted up with a glow of hope; his eye had its old fire, his whole being was filled with new life, his carriage erect as in our happy days. At last the doors opened and the royal couple entered. 'Pray for me, my son,' my father whispered—'pray for me that my hopes be not disappointed, else I shall fall dead to the earth.' But I could not pray, I could not think. I could only gaze at the beautiful young queen, who seemed to my eyes as if beaming in a golden cloud surrounded by all the stars of heaven. The eyes of the queen darted inquiringly through the hall; at last she caught mine and smiled. Oh that smile! it shot like a ray of sunlight through my soul, it filled my whole being with rapture. I sank upon my knee, folded my hands, and now I could think, could pray: 'A blessing upon the queen! she comes to save my dear father's life, for she frees us from our sufferings.' The queen approached, so beautiful, so lovely, with such a beaming eye. She held a sealed paper in her hand and gave it to my father with a gentle inclination of her head. 'Here, sir,' she said, 'the king is happy to be able to reward, in the name of France, one of his best officers. The king grants you a yearly pension of three hundred louis-d'or, and I wish for you and your son that you may live yet many years to enjoy happiness and health. Go at once with this paper to the treasury, and you will receive the first quarterly payment.' Then, when she saw that my father was almost swooning, she summoned with a loud voice some gentlemen of the court, and commanded them to take care of my father; to take him out into the fresh air, and to arrange that he be sent home in a carriage. Now all these fine gentlemen were busy in helping us. Every one vied with the others in being friendly to us; and the poor neglected invalid who had been crowded to the wall, the overlooked officer Toulan, was now an object of universal care and attention. We rode home to our inn in a royal carriage, and the host did not grumble any longer; he was anxious to procure us food, and very active in caring for all our needs. The queen had saved us from misfortune, the queen had made us happy and well to do."

"A blessing upon the dear head of our queen!" cried Margaret, raising her folded hands to heaven. "Now I shall doubly love her, for she is the benefactor of him I love. Oh, why have you waited until now before telling me this beautiful, touching story? Why have I not enjoyed it before? But I thank you from my heart for the good which it has done me."

"My dear one," answered Toulan, gravely, "there are experiences in the human soul that one may reveal only in the most momentous epochs of life—just as in the Jewish temple the Holy of Holies was revealed only on the chief feast-days. Such a time, my dear one, is to-day, and I withdraw all veils from my heart, and let you see and know what, besides you, only God sees and knows. Since that day when I returned with my father from the palace, and when the queen had made us happy again—since that day my whole soul has belonged to the queen. I thanked her for all, for the contentment of my father, for every cheerful hour which we spent together; and all the knowledge I have gained, all the studies I have attempted, I owe to the beautiful, noble Marie Antoinette. We went to our home, and I entered the high-school in order to fit myself to be a merchant, a bookseller. My father had enjoined upon me not to choose a soldier's lot. The sad experience of his invalid life hung over him like a dark cloud, and he did not wish that I should ever enter into the same. 'Be an independent, free man,' said he to me. 'Learn to depend on your own strength and your own will alone. Use the powers of your mind, become a soldier of labor, and so serve your country. I know, indeed, that if the hour of danger ever comes, you will be a true, bold soldier for your queen, and fight for her till your last breath.' I had to promise him on his death-bed that I would so do. Even then he saw the dark and dangerous days approach, which have now broken upon the realm—even then he heard the muttering of the tempest which now so inevitably is approaching; and often when I went home to his silent chamber I found him reading, with tears in his eyes, the pamphlets and journals which had come from Paris to us at Rouen, and which seemed to us like the storm-birds announcing the tempest. 'The queen is so good, so innocent,' he would sigh, 'and they make her goodness a crime and her innocence they make guilt! She is like a lamb, surrounded by tigers, that plays thoughtlessly with the flowers, and does not know the poison that lurks beneath them. Swear to me, Louis, that you will seek, if God gives you the power, to free the lamb from the bloodthirsty tigers. Swear to me that your whole life shall be devoted to her service.' And I did swear it, Margaret, not merely to my dear father, but to myself as well. Every day I have repeated, 'To Queen Marie Antoinette belongs my life, for every thing that makes life valuable I owe to her.' When my father died, I left Rouen and removed to Paris, there to pursue my business as a bookseller. My suspicions told me that the time would soon come when the friends of the queen must rally around her, and must perhaps put a mask over their faces, in order to sustain themselves until the days of real danger. That time has now come, Margaret; the queen is in danger! The tigers have surrounded the lamb, and it cannot escape. Enemies everywhere, wherever you look!—enemies even in the palace itself. The Count de Provence, her own brother-in-law, has for years persecuted her with his epigrams, because he cannot forgive it in her that the king pays more attention to her counsels than he does to those of his brother, who hates the Austrian. The Count d'Artois, formerly the only friend of Marie Antoinette in the royal family, deserted her when the queen took ground against the view of the king's brothers in favor of the double representation of the Third Estate, and persuaded her husband to comply with the wishes of the nation and call together the States-General. He has gone over to the camp of her enemies, and rages against the queen, because she is inclined to favor the wishes of the people. And yet this very people is turned against her, does not believe in the love, but only in the hate of the queen, and all parties are agreed in keeping the people in this faith. The Duke d'Orleans revenges himself upon the innocent and pure queen for the scorn which she displays to this infamous prince. The aunts of the queen revenge themselves for the obscure position to which fate has consigned them, they having to play the second part at the brilliant court of Versailles, and be thrown into the shade by Marie Antoinette. The whole court—all these jealous, envious ladies—revenge themselves for the favor which the queen has shown to the Polignacs. They have undermined her good name; they have fought against her with the poisoned arrows of denunciation, calumny, pamphlets, and libels. Every thing bad that has happened has been ascribed to her. She has been held responsible for every evil that has happened to the nation. The queen is accountable for the financial troubles that have broken over us, and since the ministry have declared the state bankrupt, Parisians call the queen Madame Deficit. Curses follow her when she drives out, and even when she enters the theatre. Even in her own gardens of St. Cloud and Trianon men dare to insult the queen as she passes by. In all the clubs of Paris they thunder at the queen, and call her the destruction of France. The downfall of Marie Antoinette is resolved upon by her enemies, and the time has come when her friends must be active for her. The time has come for me to pay the vow which I made to my dying father and to myself. God has blessed my efforts and crowned my industry and activity with success. I have reached an independent position. The confidence of my fellow-citizens has made me a councillor. I have accepted the position, not out of vanity or ambition, but because it will give me opportunity to serve the queen. I wear a mask before my face. I belong to the democrats and agitators. I appear to the world as an enemy of the queen, in order to be able to do her some secret service as a friend; for I say to you, and repeat it before God, to the queen belong my whole life, my whole being, and thought. I love you, Margaret! Every thing which can make my life happy will come from you, and yet I shall be ready every hour to leave you—to see my happiness go to ruin without a complaint, without a sigh, if I can be of service to the queen. You my heart loves; her my soul adores. Wherever I shall be, Margaret, if the call of the queen comes to me, I shall follow it, even if I know that death lurks at the door behind which the queen awaits me. We stand before a dark and tempestuous time, and our country is to be torn with fearful strife. All passions are unfettered, all want to fight for freedom, and against the chains with which the royal government has held them bound. An abyss has opened between the crown and the nation, and the States-General and the Third Estate will not close it, but only widen it. I tell you, Margaret, dark days are approaching; I see them coming, and I cannot, for your sake, withdraw from them, for I am the soldier of the queen. I must keep guard before her door, and, if I cannot save her, I must die in her service. Know this, Margaret, but know, too, that I love you. Let me repeat, that from you alone all fortune and happiness can come to me, and then do you decide. Will you, after all that I have told you, still accept my hand, which I offer you in tenderest affection? Will you be my wife, knowing that my life belongs not to you alone, but still more to another? Will you share with me the dangers of a stormy time, of an inevitable future with me, and devote yourself with me to the service of the queen? Examine yourself, Margaret, before you answer. Do not forget your great and noble heart; consider that it is a vast sacrifice to devote your life to a man who is prepared every hour to give his life for another woman—to leave the one he loves, and to go to his death in defence of his queen. Prove your heart; and, if you find that the sacrifice is too great, turn your face away from me, and I will quickly go my way—will not complain, will think that it happens rightly, will love you my whole life long, and thank you for the pleasant hours which your love has granted to me."

He had dropped from the divan upon his knee, and looked up to her with supplicating and anxious eyes.

But Margaret did not turn her face away from him. A heavenly smile played over her features, her eye beamed with love and emotion. And as her glance sank deep into the heart of her lover, he caught the look as if it had been a ray of sunlight. She laid her arms upon his shoulders, and pressing his head to her bosom, she bowed over him and kissed his black, curly hair.

"Ah! I love you, Louis," she whispered. "I am ready to devote my life to you, to share your dangers with you, and in all contests to stand by your side. Soldier of the queen, in me you shall always have a comrade. With you I will fight for her, with you die for her, if it must be. We will have a common love for her, we will serve her in common, and with fidelity and love thank her for the good which she has done to you and your father."

"Blessings upon you, Margaret!" cried Toulan, as breaking into tears he rested his head upon the knee of his affianced. "Blessings on you, angel of my love and happiness!" Then he sprang up, and, drawing the young girl within his arms, he impressed a glowing kiss upon her lips. "That is my betrothal kiss, Margaret; now you are mine; in this hour our souls are united in never-ending love and faithfulness. Nothing can separate us after this, for we journey hand in hand upon the same road; we have the same great and hallowed goal! Now come, my love, let us take our place before the altar of God, and testify with an oath to the love which we cherish toward our queen!"

He offered her his arm, and, both smiling, both with beaming faces, left the room, and joined the wedding guests who had long been waiting for them with growing impatience. They entered the carriages and drove to the church. With joyful faces the bridal pair pledged their mutual fidelity before the altar, and their hands pressed one another, and their eyes met with a secret understanding of all that was meant at that wedding. They both knew that at that moment they were pledging their fidelity to the queen, and that, while seeming to give themselves away to each other, they were really giving themselves to their sovereign.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, they left the church of St. Louis to repair to the wedding dinner, which Councillor Bugeaud had ordered to be prepared in one of the most brilliant restaurants of Versailles.

"Will you not tell me now, my dear son," he said to Toulan—"will you not tell me now why you wish so strongly to celebrate the wedding in Versailles, and not in Paris, and why in the church of St. Louis?"

"I will tell you, father," answered Toulan, pressing the arm of his bride closer to his heart. "I wanted here, where the country erects its altar, where in a few days the nation will meet face to face these poor earthly majesties; here, where in a few days the States-General will convene, to defend the right of the people against the prerogative of the sovereign, here alone to give to my life its new consecration. Versailles will from this time be doubly dear to me. I shall owe to it my life's happiness as a man, my freedom as a citizen. They have done me the honor in Rouen to elect me to a place in the Third Estate, and as, in a few days, the Assembly of the Nation will meet here in Versailles, I wanted my whole future happiness to be connected with the place. And I wanted to be married in St. Louis's church, because I love the good King Louis. He is the true and sincere friend of the nation, and he would like to make his people happy, if the queen, the Austrian, would allow it."

"Yes, indeed," sighed the councillor, who, in spite of his relation to Madame de Campan, belonged to the opponents of the queen—"yes, indeed, if the Austrian woman allowed it. But she is not willing that France should be happy. Woe to the queen; all our misery comes from her!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE OPENING OF THE STATES-GENERAL.

On the morning of the 5th of May, 1789, the solemn opening of the States-General of France was to occur at Versailles. This early date was appointed for the convocation of the estates, in order to be able to protract as much as possible the ceremonial proceedings. But at the same time this occasion was to be improved in preparing a sensible humiliation for the members of the Third Estate.

In the avenue of the Versailles palace a large and fine hall was fixed upon as the most appropriate place for receiving the twelve hundred representatives of France, and a numerous company of spectators besides; and, being chosen, was appropriately fitted up. Louis XVI. himself, who was very fond of sketching and drawing architectural plans, had busied himself in the most zealous way with the arrangements and decorations of the hall.

It had long been a matter of special interest to the king to fit up the room which was to receive the representatives of the nation, in a manner which would be worthy of so significant an occasion. He had himself selected the hangings and the curtains which were to protect the audience from the too glaring light of the day.

When the members of the Third Estate arrived, they saw with the greatest astonishment that they were not to enter the hall by the same entrance which was appropriated to the representatives of the nobility and the clergy, who were chosen at the same time with themselves. While for the last two the entrance was appointed through the main door of the hall, the commoners were allowed to enter by a rear door, opening into a dark and narrow corridor, where, crowded together, they were compelled to wait till the doors were opened.

Almost two hours elapsed before they were allowed to pass out of this dark place of confinement into the great hall, at a signal from the Marquis de Brizé, the master of ceremonies.

A splendid scene now greeted their eyes. The Salle de Menus, which had been fitted up for the reception of the nobility, displayed within two rows of Ionic pillars, which gave to the hall an unwonted air of dignity and solemnity. The hall was lighted mainly from above, through a skylight, which was covered with a screen of white sarcenet. A gentle light diffused itself throughout the room, making one object as discernible as another. In the background the throne could be seen on a richly ornamented estrade and beneath a gilded canopy, an easy-chair for the queen, tabourets for the princesses, and chairs for the other members of the royal family. Below the estrade stood the bench devoted to the ministers and the secretaries of state. At the right of the throne, seats had been placed for the clergy, on the left for the nobility; while in front were the six hundred chairs devoted to the Third Estate.

The Marquis de Brizé, with two assistant masters of ceremonies, now began to assign the commoners to their seats, in accordance with the situation of the districts which they represented.

As the Duke d'Orleans appeared in the midst of the other deputies of Crespy, there arose from the amphitheatre, where the spectators sat, a gentle sound of applause, which increased in volume, and was repeated by some of the commoners, when it was noticed that the duke made a clergyman, who had gone behind him in the delegation from this district, go in front of him, and did not desist till the round-bellied priest had really taken his place before him.

In the mean time the bench of the ministers had begun to fill. They appeared as a body, clothed in rich uniforms, heavy with gold. Only one single man among them appeared in simple citizen's clothing, and bearing himself as naturally as if he were engaged in business of the state, or in ordinary parlor conversation, and by no means as if taking part in an extraordinary solemnity. As soon as he was seen, there arose on all sides, as much in the assembly as on the tribune, a movement as of joy which culminated in a general clapping of hands.

The man who received this salutation was the newly-appointed minister of finance, Necker, to whom the nation was looking for a reëstablishment of its prosperity and of its credit.

Necker manifested only by a thoughtful smile, which mounted to his earnest, thought-furrowed face, that he was conscious to whom the garland of supreme popularity was extended at this moment.

Next, the deputation of Provence appeared, in the midst of which towered Count Mirabeau, with his proud, erect bearing, advancing to take the place appointed for him. His appearance was the sign for a few hands to commence clapping in a distant part of the hall, in honor of a man so much talked of in France, and of whom such strange things were said. But at this instant the king appeared, accompanied by the queen, followed by the princes and princesses of the royal family.

At the entrance of the king, the whole assembly broke into a loud, enthusiastic shout of applause and of joy.

The Third Estate as well, at a signal from Count Mirabeau, had quickly risen, but continued to stand without bending the knee, as had been, at the last time when all the estates were assembled, the invariable rule. Only one of the representatives of the Third Estate, a young man with energetic, proud face, and dark, glowing eyes, bent his knee when he saw the queen entering behind the king. But the powerful hand of his neighbor was laid upon his shoulder and drew him quickly up.

"Mr. Deputy," whispered this neighbor to him, "it becomes the representatives of the nation to stand erect before the crown."

"It is true, Count Mirabeau," answered Toulan. "I did not bend my knee to the crown, but to the queen as a beautiful woman."

Mirabeau made no reply, but turned his flaming eyes to the king.

Louis XVI. appeared that day arrayed in the great royal ermine, and wore upon his head a plumed hat, whose band glistened with great diamonds, while the largest in the royal possession, the so-called Titt, formed the centre, and threw its rays far and wide. The king appeared at the outset to be deeply moved at the reception which had been given him. A smile, indicating that his feelings were touched, played upon his face. But afterward, when all was still, and the king saw the grave, manly, marked faces of the commoners opposite him, his manner became confused, and for an instant he seemed to tremble.

The queen, however, looked around her with a calm and self-possessed survey. Her fine eyes swept slowly and searchingly over the rows of grave men who sat opposite the royal couple, and dwelt a moment on Toulan, as if she recalled in him the young man who, two years before, had brought the message of Cardinal Rohan's acquittal. A painful smile shot for an instant over her fine features. Yes, she had recognized him; the young man who, at Madame de Campan's room, had sworn a vow of eternal fidelity to her. And now he sat opposite her, on the benches of the commoners, among her enemies, who gazed at her with angry looks. That was his way of fulfilling the vow which he had made of his own free will!

But Marie Antoinette wondered at nothing now; she had witnessed the falling away of so many friends, she had been forsaken by so many who were closely associated with her, and who were indebted to her, that it caused her no surprise that the young man who hardly knew her, who had admired her in a fit of youthful rapture, had done like all the rest in joining the number of her enemies.

Marie Antoinette sadly let her eyes fall. She could look at nothing more; she had in this solemn moment received a new wound, seen a new deserter!

Toulan read her thoughts in her sad mien, on her throbbing forehead, but his own countenance remained cheerful and bright.

"She will live to see the day when she will confess that I am her friend, am true to her," he said to himself. "And on that day I shall be repaid for the dagger-thrusts which I have just received from her eyes. Courage, Toulan, courage! Hold up your head and be strong. The contest has begun; you must fight it through or die!"

But the queen did not raise her head again. She looked unspeakably sad in her simple, unadorned attire—in her modest, gentle bearing—and it was most touching to see the pale, fair features which sought in vain to disclose nothing of the painful emotions of her soul.

The king now arose from his throne and removed his plumed hat. At once Marie Antoinette rose from her armchair, in order to listen standing to the address of the king.

"Madame," said the king, bowing to her lightly, "madame, be seated, I beg of you."

"Sire," answered Marie Antoinette, calmly, "allow me to stand, for it does not become a subject to sit while the king is standing."

A murmur ran through the rows of men, and loud, scornful laughter from one side. Marie Antoinette shrank back as if an adder had wounded her, and with a flash of wrath her eyes darted in the direction whence the laugh had come. It was from Philip d'Orleans. He did not take the trouble to smooth down his features; he looked with searching, defiant gaze over to the queen, proclaiming to her in this glance that he was her death-foe, that he was bent on revenge for the scorn which she had poured out on the spendthrift—revenge for the joke which she had once made at his expense before the whole court. It was at the time when the Duke d'Orleans, spendthrift and miser at the same time, had rented the lower rooms of his palace to be used as stores. On his next appearance at Versailles, Marie Antoinette said: "Since you have become a shopkeeper, we shall probably see you at Versailles only on Sundays and holidays, when your stores are closed!"

Philip d'Orleans thought of this at this moment, as he stared at the queen with his laughing face, while his looks were threatening vengeance and requital.

The king now began the speech with which he proposed to open the assembly of his estates. The queen listened with deep emotion; a feeling of unspeakable sorrow filled her soul, and despite all her efforts her eyes filled with tears, which leisurely coursed down her cheeks. When, at the close of his address, the king said that he was the truest and most faithful friend of the people, and that France had his whole love, the queen looked up with a gentle, beseeching expression, and her eyes seemed as if they wanted to say to the deputies, "I, too, am a friend of the people! I, too, love France!"

The king ended his address; it was followed by a prolonged and lively clapping of hands, and sitting down upon the chair of the throne, he covered his head with the jewelled *chapeau*.

At the same moment all the noblemen who were in the hall put on their own hats. At once Count Mirabeau, the representative of the Third Estate, put on his hat; other deputies followed his example, but Toulan, whom Mirabeau had before hindered from kneeling—Toulan now wanted to prevent the proud democrats covering themselves in presence of the queen.

"Hats off!" he cried, with a loud voice, and here and there in the hall the same cry was repeated.

But from other sides there arose a different cry, "Hats on! Be covered!"

Scarcely had the ear of the king caught the discordant cry which rang up and down the hall, when he snatched his hat from his head, and at once the whole assembly followed his example.

Toulan had gained his point, the assembly remained uncovered in presence of the queen.

At last, after four long, painful hours, the ceremony was ended; the queen followed the example of the king, rising, greeting the deputies with a gentle inclination of her head, and leaving the hall at the side of the king.

Some of the deputies cried, "Long live the king!" but their words died away without finding any echo. Not a single voice was raised in honor of the queen! But outside, on the square, there were confused shouts; the crowd of people pressed hard up to the door, and called for the queen. They had seen the deputies as they entered the hall; they had seen the king as he had attended divine service at the church of St. Louis. Now the people were curious to see the queen!

A joyful look passed over the face of the queen as she heard those cries. For a long time she had not heard such acclaims. Since the unfortunate 1786, since the necklace trial, they had become more rare; at last, they had ceased altogether, and at times the queen, when she appeared in public, was hailed with loud hisses and angry murmurs.

"The queen! The queen!" sounded louder and louder in the great square. Marie Antoinette obeyed the cry, entered the great hall, had the doors opened which led to the balcony, went out and showed herself to the people, and greeted them with friendly smiles.

But, instead of the shouts of applause which she had expected, the crowd relapsed at once into a gloomy silence. Not a hand was raised to greet her, not a mouth was opened to cry "Long live the queen!"

Soon, however, there was heard a harsh woman's voice shouting, "Long live the Duke d'Orleans! Long life to the friend of the people!"

The queen, pale and trembling, reeled back from the balcony, and sank almost in a swoon into the arms of the Duchess de Polignac, who was behind her. Her eyes were closed, and a convulsive spasm shook her breast.

Through the opened doors of the balcony the shouts of the people could be heard all the time, "Long live the Duke d'Orleans!"

The queen, still in her swoon, was carried into her apartments and laid upon her bed; only Madame de Campan remained in front of it to watch the queen, who, it was supposed, had fallen asleep.

A deep silence prevailed in the room, and the stillness awoke Marie Antoinette from her half insensibility. She opened her eyes, and seeing Campan kneeling before her bed, she threw her arms around the faithful friend, and with gasping breath bowed her head upon her shoulder.

"Oh, Campan," she cried, with loud, choking voice, "ruin is upon me! I am undone! All my happiness is over, and soon my life will be over too! I have to-day tasted of the bitterness of death! We shall never be happy more, for destruction hangs over us, and our death-sentence is pronounced!"

CHAPTER X.

THE INHERITANCE OF THE DAUPHIN.

For four weeks the National Assembly met daily at Versailles; that is to say, for four weeks the political excitement grew greater day by day, the struggle of the parties more pronounced and fierce, only with this qualification, that the party which attacked the queen was stronger than that which defended her. Or rather, to express the exact truth, there was no party for Marie Antoinette; there were only here and there devoted friends, who dared to encounter the odium which their position called down upon them—dared face the calumnies which were set in circulation by the other parties: that of the people, the democrats; that of Orleans; that of the princes and princesses of the royal family. All these united their forces in order to attack the "Austrian," to obscure the last gleams of the love and respect which were paid to her in happier days.

When Mirabeau made the proposition in the National Assembly that the person of the king should be declared inviolable, there arose from all these four hundred representatives of the French nation only one man who dared to declare with a loud voice and with defiant face, "The persons of the king and *queen* shall be declared inviolable!"

This was Toulan, the "soldier of the queen." But the Assembly replied to this demand only with loud murmurs, and scornful laughter; not a voice was raised in support of this last cry in favor of the queen, and the Assembly decreed only this: "The person of the king is inviolable."

"That means," said the queen to the police minister Brienne, who brought the queen every morning tidings of what had occurred at Paris and Versailles, "that means that my death-warrant was signed yesterday."

"Your majesty goes too far!" cried the minister in horror. "I think that this has an entirely different meaning. The National Assembly has not pronounced the person of the queen inviolable, because they want to say that the queen has nothing to do with politics, and therefore it is unnecessary to pass judgment upon the inviolability of the queen."

"Ah!" sighed the queen, "I should have been happy if I had not been compelled to trouble myself with these dreadful politics. It certainly was not in my wish nor in my character. My enemies have compelled me to it; it is they who have turned the simple, artless queen into an intriguer."

"Ah! madam!" said the minister, astonished, "you use there too harsh a word; you speak as if they belonged to your enemies."

"No, I use the right word," cried Marie Antoinette, sadly. "My enemies have made an intriguer of me. Every woman who goes beyond her knowledge and the bounds of her duty in meddling with politics is nothing better than an intriguer. You see at least that I do not flatter myself, although it troubles me to have to give myself so bad a name. The Queens of France are happy only when they have nothing to trouble themselves about, and reserve only influence enough to give pleasure to their friends, and reward their faithful servants. Do you know what recently happened to me?" continued the queen, with a sad smile. "As I was going into the privy council chamber to have a consultation with the king, I heard, while passing Œil de Bœuf, one of the musicians saying so loud that I had to listen to every word, 'A queen who does her duty stays in her own room and busies herself with her sewing and knitting.' I said within myself, 'Poor fellow, you are right, but you don't know my unhappy condition; I yield only to necessity, and my bad luck urges me forward.' " *

"Ah! madame," said the minister with a sigh, "would that they who accuse you of mingling in politics out of ambition and love of power—would that they could hear your majesty complain of yourself in these moving words!"

"My friend," said Marie Antoinette, with a sad smile, "if they heard it they would say that it was only something learned by heart, with which I was trying to disarm the righteous anger of my enemies. It is in vain to want to excuse or justify myself, for no one will hear a word. I must be guilty, I must be criminal, that they who accuse me may appear to have done right; that they may ascend while they pull me down. But let us not speak more of this! I know my future, I feel it clear and plain in my mind and in my soul that I am lost, but I will at least fight courageously and zealously till the last moment; and, if I must go down, it shall be at least with honor, true to myself and true to the views and opinions in which I have been trained. Now, go on; let me know the new libels and accusations which have been disseminated about me."

The minister drew from his portfolio a whole package of pamphlets, and spread them upon a little table before the queen.

"So much at once!" said the queen, sadly, turning over the papers. "How much trouble I make to my enemies, and how much they must hate me that I have such tenacity of life! Here is a pamphlet entitled 'Good advice to Madame Deficit to leave France as soon as possible.' 'Madame Deficit!' that means me, doesn't it?"

"It is a name, your majesty, which the wickedness of the Duke d'Orleans has imposed upon your majesty," answered the minister, with a shrug of his shoulders.

The eyes of the queen flashed in anger. She opened her lips to utter a choleric word, but she governed herself, and went on turning over the pamphlets and caricatures. While doing that, while reading the words charged with

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* The queen's own words.—See "Mémoires de Madame de Campan," vol. ii., p. 32.

poison of wickedness and hate, the tears coursed slowly over her cheeks, and once in a while a convulsive gasp forced itself from her breast.

Brienne pitied the deep sorrow of the queen. He begged her to discontinue this sad perusal. He wanted to gather up again the contumelious writings, but Marie Antoinette held his hand back.

"I must know every thing, every thing," said she. "Go on bringing me every thing, and do not be hindered by my tears. It is of course natural that I am sensitive to the evil words that are spoken about me, and to the bad opinion that is cherished toward me by a people that I love, and to win whose love I am prepared to make every sacrifice." *

At this moment the door of the cabinet was dashed open without ceremony, and the Duchess de Polignac entered.

"Forgiveness! your majesty, forgiveness that I have ventured to disturb you, but—"

"What is it?" cried the queen, springing up. "You come to announce misfortune to me, duchess. It concerns the dauphin, does it not? His illness has increased?"

"Yes, your majesty, cramps have set in, and the physicians fear the worst."

"O God! O God!" cried the queen, raising both her hands to heaven, "is every misfortune to beat down upon me? I shall lose my son, my dear child! Here I sit weeping pitiful tears about the malice of my enemies, and all this while my child is wrestling in the pains of death! Farewell, sir, I must go to my child."

And the queen, forgetting every thing else, thinking only of her child—the sick, dying dauphin—hurried forward, dashing through the room with such quick step that the duchess could scarcely follow her.

"Is he dead?" cried Marie Antoinette to the servant standing in the antechamber of the dauphin. She did not await the reply, but burst forward, hastily opened the door of the sick-room, and entered.

There upon the bed, beneath the gold-fringed canopy, lay the pale, motionless boy, with open, staring eyes, with parched lips, and wandering mind—and it was her child, it was the Dauphin of France.

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* The queen's own words.—See Malleville, "Histoire de Marie Antoinette," p. 197.

Around his bed stood the physicians, the quickly-summoned priests, and the servants, looking with sorrowful eyes at the poor, deathly-pale creature that was now no more than a withered flower, a son of dust that must return to dust; then they looked sadly at the pale, trembling wife who crouched before the bed, and who now was nothing more than a sorrow-stricken mother, who must bow before the hand of Fate, and feel that she had no more power over life and death than the meanest of her subjects.

She bent over the bed; she put her arms tenderly around the little shrunken form of the poor child that had long been sick, and that was now confronting death. She covered the pale face of her son with kisses, and watered it with her tears.

And these kisses, these tears of his mother, awakened the child out of his stupor, and called him back to life. The Dauphin Louis roused up once more, raised his great eyes, and, when he saw the countenance of his mother above him bathed in tears, he smiled and sought to raise his head and move his hand to greet her. But Death had already laid his iron bands upon him, and held him back upon the couch of his last sufferings.

"Are you in pain, my child?" whispered Marie Antoinette, kissing him affectionately. "Are you suffering?"

The boy looked at her tenderly. "I do not suffer," he whispered so softly that it sounded like the last breath of a departing spirit. "I only suffer if I see you weep, mamma." *

Marie Antoinette quickly dried her tears, and, kneeling near the bed, found power in her motherly love to summon a smile to her lips, in order that the dauphin, whose eyes remained fixed upon her, might not see that she was suffering.

A deep silence prevailed now in the apartment; nothing was heard but the gently-whispered prayers of the spectators, and the slow, labored breathing of the dying child.

Once the door was lightly opened, and a man's figure stole lightly in, advanced on tiptoe to the bed, and sank on his knees close by Marie Antoinette. It was the king, who had just been summoned from the council-room to see his son die.

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* The very words of the dying dauphin.—See Weber, "Mémoires," vol. i., p. 209.

And now with a loud voice the priest began the prayers for the dying, and all present softly repeated them. Only the queen could not; her eyes were fastened upon her son, who now saw her no more, for his eyes were fixed in the last death-struggle.

Still one last gasp, one last breath; then came a cry from Marie Antoinette's lips, and her head sank upon the hand of her son, which rested in her own, and which was now stiff. A few tears coursed slowly over the cheeks of the king, and his hands, folded in prayer, trembled.

The priest raised his arms, and with a loud, solemn voice cried: "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord. Amen."

"Amen, amen," whispered all present.

"Amen," said the king, closing with gentle pressure the open eyes of his son. "God has taken you to Himself, my son, perhaps because He wanted to preserve you from much trouble and sorrow. Blessed be His name!"

But the queen still bowed over the cold face of the child, and kissed his lips. "Farewell, my son," she whispered, "farewell! Ah, why could I not die with you—with you fly from this pitiful, sorrow-stricken world?"

Then, as if the queen regretted the words which the mother had spoken with sighs, Marie Antoinette rose from her knees and turned to the priest, who was sprinkling the corpse of the dauphin with holy water.

"Father," said she, "the children of poor parents, who may be born to-day in Versailles, are each to receive from me the sum of a thousand francs. I wish that the death-bed of my son may be a day of joy for the poor who have not, like me, lost a child, but gained one, and that the lips of happy mothers may bless the day on which my boy died. Have the goodness to bring me to-morrow morning a list of the children born to-day."

"Come, Marie," said the king, "the body of our son belongs no more to the living, but to the grave of our ancestors in St. Denis; his soul to God. The dauphin is dead! Long live the dauphin! Madame de Polignac, conduct the dauphin to us in the cabinet of his mother."

And with the proud and dignified bearing which was peculiar to the king in great and momentous epochs, he extended his arm to the queen and conducted her out of the death-chamber, and through the adjacent apartments, to her cabinet.

"Ah!" cried the queen, "here we are alone; here I can weep for my poor lost child."

And she threw her arms around the neck of her husband, and, leaning her head upon his breast, wept aloud. The king pressed her closely to his heart, and the tears which flowed from his own eyes fell in hot drops upon the head of the queen.

Neither saw the door beyond lightly open, and the Duchess de Polignac appear there. But when she saw the royal pair in close embrace, when she heard their loud weeping, she drew back, stooped down to the little boy who stood by her side, whispered a few words to him, and, while gently pushing him forward, drew back herself, and gently closed the door behind them. The little fellow stood a moment irresolutely at the door, fixing his eyes now upon his father and mother, now upon the nosegay of violets and roses which he carried in his hand. The little Louis Charles was of that sweet and touching beauty that brings tears into one's eyes, and fills the heart with sadness, because the thought cannot be suppressed, that life, with its rough, wintry storms, will have no pity on this tender blossom of innocence, and that the beaming, angel-face of the child must one day be changed into the clouded, weather-beaten, furrowed face of the man. A cheering sight to look upon was the little, delicate figure of the four-year-old boy, pleasing in his whole appearance. Morocco boots, with red tips, covered his little feet; broad trousers, of dark-blue velvet, came to his knees, and were held together at the waist by a blue silk sash, whose lace-tipped ends fell at his left side. He wore a blue velvet jacket, with a tastefully embroidered lace ruffle around the neck. The round, rosy face, with the ruby lips, the dimple in the chin, the large blue eyes, shaded by long, dark lashes, and crowned by the broad, lofty brow, was rimmed around with a profusion of golden hair, which fell in long, heavy locks upon his shoulders and over his neck. The child was as beautiful to look upon as one of the angels in Raphael's "Sistine Madonna," and he might have been taken for one, had it not been for the silver-embroidered, brilliant star upon his left side. This star, which designated his princely rank, was for the pretty child the seal of his mortality—the seal which ruin had already impressed upon his innocent child's breast.

One moment the boy stood indecisively there, looking at his weeping parents; then he turned quickly forward, and, holding up his nosegay, he said: "Mamma, I have brought you some flowers from my garden."

Marie Antoinette raised her head, and smiled through her tears as she looked at her son. The king loosened his embrace from the queen, in order to lift up the prince.

"Marie," said he, holding him up to his wife, "Marie, this is our son—this is the Dauphin of France."

Marie Antoinette took his head between her hands, and looked long, with tears in her eyes, and yet smiling all the while, into the lovely, rosy face of her boy. Then she stooped down, and impressed a long, tender kiss upon his smooth forehead.

"God love you, my child!" said she, solemnly. "God bless you, Dauphin of France! May the storms which now darken our horizon, have long been past when you shall ascend the throne of your fathers! God bless and defend you, Dauphin of France!"

"But, mamma," asked the boy, timidly, "why do you call me dauphin to-day? I am your little Louis, and I am called Duke de Normandy."

"My son," said the king, solemnly, "God has been pleased to give you another name and another calling. Your poor brother, Louis, has left us forever. He has gone to God, and you are now Dauphin of France!"

"And God grant that it be for your good," said the queen, with a sigh.

The little prince slowly shook his locks. "It certainly is not for my good," said he, "else mamma would not weep."

"She is weeping, my child," said the queen—"she is weeping, because your brother, who was the dauphin, has left us."

"And will he never come back?" asked the child, eagerly.

"No, Louis, he never will come back."

The boy threw both his arms around the neck of the queen. "Ah!" he cried, "how can any one ever leave his dear mamma and never come back? *I* will never leave you, mamma!"

"I pray God you speak the truth," sighed the queen, pressing him tenderly to herself. "I pray God I may die before you both!"

"Not before me—oh, not before me!" ejaculated the king, shuddering. "Without you, my dear one, my life were a desert; without you, the King of France were the poorest man in the whole land!"

He smiled sadly at her. "And with me he will perhaps be the most unfortunate one," she whispered softly, as if to herself.

"Never unfortunate, if you are with me, and if you love me," cried the king, warmly. "Weep no more; we must overcome our grief, and comfort ourselves with what remains. I say to you once more: the dauphin is dead, long live the dauphin!"

"Papa king," said the boy, quickly, "you say the dauphin is dead, and has left us. Has he taken every thing away with him that belongs to him?"

"No, my son, he has left every thing. You are now the dauphin, and some time will be King of France, for you are the heir of your brother."

"What does that mean, his heir?" asked the child.

"It means," answered the king, "that to you belong now the titles and honors of your brother."

"Nothing but that?" asked the prince, timidly. "I do not want his titles and honors."

"You are the heir to the throne; you have now the title of Dauphin of France."

The little one timidly grasped the hand of his mother, and lifted his great blue eyes supplicatingly to her. "Mamma queen," he whispered, "do you not think the title of Duke de Normandy sounds just as well, or will you love me more, if I am called Dauphin of France?"

"No, my son," answered the queen, "I shall not love you better, and I should be very happy if you were now the Duke de Normandy."

"Then, mamma," cried the boy, eagerly, "I am not at all glad to receive this new title. But I should like to know whether I have received any thing else from my dear sick brother."

"Any thing else?" asked the king in amazement; "what would you desire, my child?"

The little prince cast down his eyes. "I should not like to tell, papa. But if it is true that the dauphin has left us and is not coming back again, and yet has not taken away every thing which belongs to him, there is something which I should very much like to have, and which would please me more than that I am now the dauphin."

The king turned his face inquiringly to the queen. "Do you understand, Marie, what he wants to say?" he whispered.

"I think I can guess," answered Marie Antoinette softly, and she walked quickly across the room, opened the door of the adjoining apartment, and whispered a few words to the page who was there. Then she returned to the king, but while doing so she stepped upon the bouquet which had fallen out of the boy's hands when his father lifted him up.

"Oh, my pretty violets, my pretty roses," cried the prince, sadly, and his face put on a sorrowful expression. But he quickly brightened, and, looking up at the queen, he said, smiling, "Mamma queen, I wish you always walked on flowers which I have planted and plucked for you!"

At this moment the door softly opened, and a little black dog stepped in, and ran forward, whining, directly up to the prince.

"Moufflet," cried the child, falling upon his knee, "Moufflet!"

The little dog, with its long, curly locks of hair, put its fore-paws upon the shoulders of the boy and eagerly and tenderly licked his laughing, rosy face.

"Now, my Louis," asked the queen, "have I guessed right?—wasn't it the doggy that you wanted so much?"

"Mamma queen has guessed it," cried the boy joyfully, putting his arms around the neck of the dog. "Does Moufflet belong to my inheritance too? Do I receive him, since my brother has left him behind?"

"Yes, my son, the little dog belongs to your inheritance," answered the king, with a sad smile.

The child shouted with pleasure, and pressed the dog close to his breast. "Moufflet is mine!" he cried, glowing with joy, "Moufflet is my inheritance!"

The queen slowly raised to heaven her eyes, red with weeping. "Oh, the innocence of childhood, the happiness of childhood!" said she, softly, "why do they not go with us through life? why must we tread them under feet like the violets and roses of my son? A kingdom falls to him as his portion, and yet he takes pleasure in the little dog which only licks his hands! Love is the fairest inheritance, for love remains with us till death!"

CHAPTER XI.

KING LOUIS THE SIXTEENTH.

THE 14th of July had broken upon Paris with its fearful events. The revolution had for the first time opened the crater, after subterranean thunder had long been heard, and after the ground of Paris had long been shaken. The glowing lava-streams of intense excitement, popular risings, and murder, had broken out and flooded all Paris, and before them judgment, discretion, and truth even, had taken flight.

The people had stormed the Bastile with arms, killed the governor, and for the first time the dreadful cry "To the lamp-post!" was heard in the streets of Paris; for the first time the iron arms of the lamp-posts had been transformed to gallows, on which those were suspended whom the people had declared guilty.

Meanwhile the lava-streams of revolution had not yet flowed out as far as Versailles.

On the evening of the 14th of July, peace and silence had settled early upon the palace, after a whole day spent in the apartments of the king and queen with the greatest anxiety, and after resolution had followed resolution in the efforts to come to a decision.

Marie Antoinette had early withdrawn to her rooms.

The king, too, had retired to rest, and had already fallen into a deep slumber upon his bed. He had only slept a few hours, however, when he heard something moving near his bed, with the evident intention of awakening him. The king recognized his valet, who, with signs of the greatest alarm in his face, announced the Duke de Liancourt, *grand maître de la garde-robe* of his majesty, who was in the antechamber, and who pressingly urged an immediate audience with the king. Louis trembled an instant, and tried to think what to do. Then he rose from his bed with a quick and energetic motion, and ordered the valet to dress him at once. After this had been done with the utmost rapidity, the king ordered that the Duke de Liancourt should be summoned to the adjacent apartment, when he would receive him.

As the king went out in the greatest excitement, he saw the duke, whose devotion to the person of the king was well known, standing before him with pale, distorted countenance and trembling limbs.

"What has happened, my friend?" asked the king, in breathless haste.

"Sire," answered the Duke de Liancourt, with suppressed voice, "in the discharge of my office, which permits the closest approach to your majesty, I have undertaken to bring you tidings which are now so confirmed, and which are so important and dreadful, that it would be a folly to try to keep what has happened longer from your knowledge."

"You speak of the occurrences in the capital?" asked the king, slightly drawing back.

"I have been told that your majesty has not yet been informed," continued the duke, "and yet in the course of yesterday the most dreadful events occurred in Paris. The head of the army had not ventured to send your majesty and the cabinet any report. It was known yesterday in Versailles at nightfall that the people, with arms in their hands, had stormed and destroyed the Bastile. I have just received a courier from Paris, and these tidings are confirmed with the most horrible particularity. Sire, I held it my duty as a faithful servant of the crown to break the silence which has hitherto hindered your majesty from seeing clearly and acting accordingly. In Paris, not only has the Bastile been stormed by the people, but truly dreadful crimes and murders have taken place. The bloody heads of Delaunay and Flesselles were carried on pikes through the city by wild crowds of people. A part of the fortifications of the Bastile have been levelled. Several of the invalides, who were guarding the fort, have been found suspended from the lantern-posts. A want of fidelity has begun to appear in the other regiments. The armed people now arrayed in the streets of Paris are estimated at two hundred thousand men. They fear this very night a rising of the whole population of the city."

The king had listened standing, as in a sad dream. His face had become pale, but his bearing was unchanged.

"There is then a revolt!" said Louis XVI., after a pause, as if suddenly awakening from deep thought.

"No, sire," answered the duke, earnestly, "it is a revolution."

"The queen was right," said the monarch, softly, to himself; "and now rivers of blood would be necessary to hide the ruin that has grown so great. But my resolution is taken; the blood of the French shall not be poured out."

"Sire," cried Liancourt, with a solemn gesture, "the safety of France and of the royal family lies in this expression of your majesty. I ought to be and I must be plain-spoken this hour. The greatest danger lies in your majesty's following the faithless counsels of your ministers. How I bless this hour which is granted me to stand face to face with your majesty, and dare to address myself to your own judgment and to your heart! Sire, the spirit of the infatuated capital will make rapid and monstrous steps forward. I conjure you make your appearance in the National Assembly to-day, and utter there the word of peace. Your appearance will work wonders; it will disarm the parties and make this body of men the truest allies of the crown."

The king looked at him with a long, penetrating glance. The youthful fire in which the noble duke had spoken appeared to move the king. He extended his hand and pressed the duke's in his own. Then he said softly: "You are yourself one of the most influential members of this

National Assembly, my lord duke. Can you give me your personal word that my appearance there will be viewed as indicating the interest of the crown in the welfare of France?"

At this moment the first glow of the morning entered the apartment, and overpowered the pale candle-light which till then had illuminated the room.

"The Assembly longs every day and every hour for the conciliatory words of your majesty," cried Liancourt. "The doubts and disquiet into which the National Assembly is falling more and more every day are not to be dispelled in any other way than by the appearance of your majesty's gracious face. I beseech you to appear to-day at the National Assembly. The service of to-day, which begins in a few hours, may take the most unfortunate turn, if you, sire, do not take this saving step."

Just then the door opened, and Monsieur, together with Count d'Artois, entered. Both brothers of the king appeared to be in the greatest excitement. From their appearance and gestures it could be inferred that the news brought by the Duke de Liancourt had reached the palace of Versailles.

Liancourt at once approached the Count d'Artois, and said to him in decisive tones:

"Prince, your head is threatened by the people. I have with my own eyes seen the poster which announces this fearful proscription."

The prince uttered a cry of terror at these words, and stood in the middle of the room like one transfixed.

"It is good, if the people think so," he said then, recovering himself. "I am, like the people, for open war. They want my head, and I want their heads. Why do we not fire? A fixed policy, no quarter to the so-called freedom ideas—cannon well served! These alone can save us!"

"His majesty the king has come to a different conclusion!" said the Duke de Liancourt, bowing low before the king, who stood calmly by with folded arms.

"I beg my brothers, the Count de Provence and the Count d'Artois, to accompany me this morning to the Assembly of States-General," said the king, in a firm tone. "I wish to go thither in order to announce to the Assembly my resolution to withdraw my troops. At the same time I shall announce to them my decided wish that they may complete the work of their counsels in peace, for I have no higher aim than through them to learn the will of the nation."

Count d'Artois retreated a step in amazement. Upon his mobile face appeared the sharp, satirical expression which was peculiar to the character of the prince. It was different with Provence, who, at the king's words, quickly approached him to press his hand in token of cordial agreement and help.

At this moment the door of the chamber was opened, and the queen, accompanied by several persons, her most intimate companions, entered in visible excitement.

"Does your majesty know what has happened?" she asked, with pale face and tearful eyes, as she violently grasped the king's hand.

"It will be all well yet," said the king, with gentle dignity; "it will prove a help to us that we have nothing as yet to accuse ourselves with. I am resolved to go to-day to the National Assembly, and to show it a sign of my personal confidence, in announcing the withdrawal of my troops from Paris and Versailles."

The queen looked at her husband with the greatest amazement; then, like one in a trance, she dropped his hand and stood supporting her fair head upon her hand, with a thoughtful, pained expression.

"By doing so your majesty will make the revolution an irrevocable fact," she then said, slowly raising her eyes to him; "and it troubles me, sire, that you will again set foot in an Assembly numbering so many dreadful and hostile men, and in which the resolution made last month to disband it ought to have been carried into effect long ago."

"Has the Assembly, in fact, so many dreadful members?" asked the king, with his good-natured smile. "Yet I see before me here two extremely amiable members of that Assembly, and their looks really give me courage to appear there. There is my old, true friend, the Duke de Liancourt, and even in the train of your majesty there is the valiant Count de la Marck, whom I heartily welcome. May I not, Count de la Marck, depend upon some favor with your colleagues in the National Assembly?" asked the king, with an amiable expression.

"Sire," answered the count, in his most perfect court manner, "in the variety of persons constituting the Assembly, I do not know a single one who would be able to close his heart to the direct word of the monarch, and such condescending grace. The nobility, to whose side I belong, would find itself confirmed thereby in its fidelity; the clergy would thank God for the manifestation of royal authority which shall bring peace; and the Third Estate would have to confess in its astonishment that safety comes only from the monarch's hands."

The king smiled and nodded in friendly manner to the count.

"It seems to me," he said, "that the time is approaching for us to go to the Assembly. Their royal highnesses Count de Provence and Count d'Artois will accompany me. I commission the Duke de Liancourt to go before us to the Salle des Menus, and to announce to the Assembly, directly after the opening of the session, that we shall appear there at once in person."

On this the king dismissed all who were present. The queen took tender leave of him, in a manner indicating her excited feelings. She had never seen her royal husband bearing himself in so decided and confident a manner, and it almost awakened new confidence in her troubled breast. But at the same moment all the doubts and cares returned, and sadly, with drooping head, the queen withdrew.

In the mean time, close upon the opening of the National Assembly that morning, stormy debates had begun about the new steps which they were going to take with the monarch.

Count Mirabeau had just been breaking out into an anathema in flaming words about the holiday which the king had given to the new regiments, when the Duke de Liancourt, who that moment entered the hall, advanced to the speaker's desk and announced that the king was just on the point of coming to the Assembly. The greatest amazement, followed immediately by intense disquiet, was expressed on all sides at hearing this. Men sprang up from their places and formed scattered groups to talk over this unexpected circumstance and come to an understanding in advance. They spoke in loud, angry words about the reception which should be given to the king in the National Assembly, when Mirabeau sprang upon the tribune, and, with his voice towering above every other sound, cried that "mere silent respect should be the only reception that we give to the monarch. In a moment of universal grief, silence is the true lesson of kings." *

A resounding bravo accompanied these words, which appeared to produce the deepest impression upon all parties in the Assembly.

Before the room was silent, the king, accompanied by his brothers, but with no other retinue besides, entered the hall. Notwithstanding all the plans and efforts which had been made, his appearance at this moment wrought so powerfully that, as soon as they saw him, the cry "Long live the king!" was taken up and repeated so often as to make the arched ceiling ring.

The king stood in the midst of the Assembly, bearing himself modestly and with uncovered head. He did not make use of an arm-chair which was placed for him, but remained standing, as, without any ceremony, he began to address the Assembly with truly patriarchal dignity. When at the very outset he said that as the chief of the nation, as he called himself, he had come with confidence to meet the nation's representatives, to testify his grief for what had happened, and to consult them respecting the re-establishing of peace and order, a pacified expression appeared upon almost all faces.

With gentle and almost humble bearing the king then entered upon the suspicions that had been breathed, that the persons of the deputies were not safe. With the tone of an honest burgher he referred to his own "well-known character," which made it superfluous for him to dismiss such a suspicion. "Ah!" he cried, "it is I who have trusted myself to you! Help me in these painful circumstances to strengthen the welfare of the state. I expect it of the National Assembly."

Then with a tone of touching kindness he said: "Counting upon the love and fidelity of my subjects, I have given

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* Mirabeau's own words.—See "Mémoires du Comte de Mirabeau," vol. ii., p. 301.

orders to the troops to withdraw from Paris and Versailles. At the same time I commission and empower you to convey these my orders to the capital."

The king now closed his address, which had been interrupted by frequent expressions of delight and enthusiasm, but which was received at the close with a thunder of universal applause. After the Archbishop of Brienne had expressed the thanks of the Assembly in a few words, the king prepared to leave the hall. At that instant all present rose in order to follow the king's steps. Silently the whole National Assembly became the retinue of the king, and accompanied him to the street.

The king wished to return on foot to the palace. Behind him walked the National Assembly in delighted, joyful ranks. The startling importance of the occasion seemed to have overpowered the most hostile and the most alienated An immense crowd of people, which had gathered before the door of the hall, seeing the king suddenly reappear in the midst of the whole National Assembly, broke into jubilant cries of delight. The shouts, "Long live the king! Long live the nation!" blended in a harmonious concord which rang far and wide. Upon the Place d'Armes were standing the *gardes du corps*, both the Swiss and the French, with their arms in their hands. But they, too, were infected with the universal gladness, as they saw the procession, whose like had never been seen before, move on.

The cries which to-day solemnized the happy reconciliation of the king and the people now were united with the discordant clang of trumpets and the rattle of drums on all sides.

Upon the great balcony of the palace at Versailles stood the queen, awaiting the return of the king. The thousands of voices raised in behalf of Louis XVI. and the nation had drawn Marie Antoinette to the balcony, after remaining in her own room with thoughts full of evil forebodings. She held the dauphin in her arms, and led her little daughter. Her eyes, from which the heavy veils of sadness were now withdrawn, cast joyful glances over the immense, shouting crowds of people approaching the palace, at whose head she joyfully recognized her husband, the king, wearing an expression of cheerfulness which for a time she had not seen on his face.

When the king caught sight of his wife, he hastened to remove his hat and salute her. But few of the deputies followed the royal example, and silently, without any salutation, without any cries of acclamation, they looked up at the queen. Marie Antoinette turned pale, and stepped back with her children into the hall.

"It is all over," she said, with a gush of tears, "it is all over with my hopes. The Queen of France is still to be the poorest and most unhappy woman in France, for she is not loved, she is despised."

Two soft young arms were laid around her neck, and with a face full of sorrow, and with tears in his great blue eyes, the dauphin looked up to the disturbed countenance of his mother.

"Mamma queen," he whispered, pressing fondly up to her, "mamma queen, I love you and everybody loves you, and my dear brother in heaven prays for you."

With a loud cry of pain, that escaped her against her will, the queen pressed her son to her heart and covered his head with her kisses.

"Love me, my son, love me," she whispered, choking, "and may thy brother in heaven pray for me that I may soon be released from the pains whch I suffer!"

But as she heard now the voice of the king without, taking leave of his retinue with friendly words, Marie Antoinette hastily dried her tears, and putting down the dauphin, whispered to him, "Do not tell papa that I have been crying," and in her wonted lofty bearing, with a smile upon her trembling lips, she went to meet her husband.

As it grew late and dark in the evening, several baggage-wagons heavily laden and tightly closed moved noiselessly and hastily from the inner courts of the palace, and took the direction toward the country. In these carriages were the Count d'Artois, the Duke d'Angoulême, and the Duke de Berry, the Prince de Condé, the Duke de Bourbon, and the Duke d'Enghein, who were leaving the kingdom in secret flight.

Louis XVI. had tried to quiet the anxieties of his brother, the Count d'Artois, by advising him to leave

France for some time, and to remain in a foreign land, until the times should be more quiet and peaceful. The other princes, although not so sorely threatened with popular rage as the Count d'Artois, whose head had already been demanded at Paris, had, with the exception of the king's other brother, been so overcome with their anxieties as to resolve upon flight. They were followed on the next day by the new ministers, who now, yielding to the demands of the National Assembly, had handed in their resignation to the king, but did not consider it safe to remain within range of the capital.

But another offering, and one more painful to the queen, had to be made to the hatred of the people and the hostile demands of the National Assembly. Marie Antoinette herself felt it, and had the courage to express it. Her friends the Polignacs must be sent away. In all the libellous pamphlets which had been directed against the queen, and which Brienne had sedulously given to her, it was one of the main charges which had been hurled against her, that the queen had given to her friends enormous sums from the state's treasury; that the Duchess Julia, as governess of the royal children, and her husband the Duke de Polignac, as director of the royal mews, received a yearly salary of two million francs; and that the whole Polignac family together drew nearly six million francs yearly from the national treasury.

Marie Antoinette knew that the people hated the Polignacs on this account, and she wanted at least to put her friends in a place of safety.

At the same hour in which the brothers of the king and the princes of the royal family left Versailles, the Duke and the Duchess de Polignac were summoned to the queen, and Marie Antoinette had told them with trembling voice that they too must fly, that they must make their escape that very night. But the duchess, as well as the duke, refused almost with indignation to comply with the request of the queen. The duchess, who before had been characterized by so calm a manner, now showed for the first time a glow of affection for her royal friend, and unreckoning tenderness. "Let us remain with you, Marie," she said, choking, and throwing both her arms around the neck of the queen. "Do not drive me from you. I will not go, I will share your perils and will die for you, if it must be."

But Marie Antoinette found now in her great love the power to resist these requests—the power to hold back the tears which started from her heart and to withdraw herself from the arms of her friend.

"It must be," she said. "In the name of our friendship I conjure you, Julia, take your departure at once, for, if you are not willing to, I shall die with anxiety about you. There is still time for you and yours to escape the rage of my enemies. They hate you not for your own sake, and how would it be possible to hate my Julia? It is for my sake, and because they hate me, that they persecute my dearest friend. Go, Julia, you ought not to be the victim of your friendship for me."

"No, I remain," said the duchess, passionately. "Nothing shall separate me from my queen."

"Duke," implored the queen, "speak the word, say that it is necessary for you to fly!"

"Your majesty," replied the duke, gravely, "I can only repeat what Julia says: nothing shall separate us from our queen. If we have in the days of prosperity enjoyed the favor of being permitted to be near your majesty, we must claim it as the highest favor to be permitted to be near you in the days of your misfortune!"

Just then the door opened and the king entered.

"Sire," said the queen, as she advanced to meet him, "help me to persuade these noble friends that they ought to leave us!"

"The queen is right," said Louis, sadly, "they must go at once. Our misfortune compels us to part with all who love and esteem us. I have just said farewell to my brother, now I say the same to you; I command you to go. Pity us, but do not lose a minute's time. Take your children and your servants with you. Reckon at all times upon me. We shall meet again in happier days, after our dangers are past, and then you shall both resume your old places. Farewell! Once more I command you to go!" *

And as the king perceived that the tears were starting

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* The king's own words. This intense parting scene is strictly historical, according to the concurrent communications of Montjoie in his "Histoire de Marie Antoinette." Campan, Mem., ii. Weber, Mem., i.

into his eyes, and that his voice was trembling, he silently bowed to his friends, and hastily withdrew.

"You have heard what the king commands," said Marie Antoinette, eagerly, "and you will not venture to disobey him. Hear also this: I too, the Queen of France, command you to take your departure this very hour."

The duke bowed low before the queen, who stood with pale cheeks, but erect, and with a noble air.

"Your majesty has commanded, and it becomes us to obey. We shall go."

The duchess sank, with a loud cry of grief, on her knee before the queen, and buried her face in the royal robe.

Marie Antoinette did not disturb her, did not venture to speak to her, for she knew that, with the first word which she should utter, the pain of her heart would find expression on her lips, and she *would* be composed; she would not let her friend see how severe the sacrifice was which her love compelled her to make.

"Let me remain with you," implored the duchess, "do not drive me from you, Marie, my Marie!"

The queen turned her great eyes upward, and her looks were a prayer to God to give her power and steadfastness. Twice then she attempted to speak, twice her voice refused to perform its duty, and she remained silent, wrestling with her grief, and at last overcoming it.

"Julia," she said—and with every word her voice became firmer and stronger—"Julia, we must part. I should be doubly unhappy to draw you and yours into my misfortunes; it will, in all my troubles, be a consolation to me, that I have been able to save you. I do not say, as the king did, that we shall meet again in happier days, and after our perils are past—for I do not believe in any more happy days—we shall not be able to survive those perils, but shall perish in them. I say, farewell, to meet not in this, but in a better world! Not a word more. I cannot bear it! Your queen commands you to go at once! Farewell!"

She extended her hand firmly to her, but she could not look at her friend, who lay at her feet weeping and choking; she saluted the duke with a mere wave of the hand, turned quickly away, and hastened into the adjoining room, and then on till she reached her own toilet-room, where Madame de Campan was awaiting her.

"Campan," she cried, in tones of anguish, "Campan, it is done! I have lost my friend! I shall never see her again. Close the door, draw the bolt, that she cannot come in, I—I shall die!" And the queen uttered a loud cry, and sank in a swoon.

At midnight two well-packed carriages drove out of the inner courts of the palace. They were the Polignacs; they were leaving France, to take refuge in Switzerland.

In the first carriage was the Duchess de Polignac, with her husband and her daughter. She held two letters in her hand. Campan had given her both, in the name of the queen, as she was stepping into the carriage.

One was directed to Minister Necker, who, after his dismissal, had withdrawn to Bâsle. Since the National Assembly, the clubs, the whole population of Paris, desired Necker's return, and declared him to be the only man who could restore the shattered finances of the country; the queen had persuaded her husband to recall the minister, although an opponent of hers, and appoint him again minister of finance. The letter of the queen, which the Duchess Julia was commissioned to give to Necker, contained his recall, announced to him in flattering words.

The second letter was a parting word from the queen to her friend, a last cry from her heart. "Farewell," it ran—"farewell, tenderly-loved friend! How dreadful this parting word is! But it is needful. Farewell! I embrace thee in spirit! Farewell!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE FIFTH OF OCTOBER, 1789.

THE morning dawned—a windy October morning, surrounding the sun with thick clouds; so the daylight came late to Paris, as if fearing to see what had taken place on the streets and squares. The national guard, summoned together by the alarm-signal of drum-beats and the clangor of trumpets and horns, collected in the gray morning light, for a fearful rumor had been spread through Paris the evening before, and one has whispered to another that to-morrow had been appointed by the clubs and by the agitators for a second act in the revolution, and the people are too quiet, they must be roused to new deeds.

"The people are too quiet," that was the watchword of the 4th of October, in all the clubs, and it was Marat who had carried it.

On the platform of the Club de Cordeliers, the cry was raised loudly and hoarsely: "Paris is in danger of folding its hands in its lap, praying and going to sleep. They must wake out of this state of lethargy, else the hateful, tyrannical monarchy will revive, and draw the nightcap so far over the ears of the sleeping capital, that it will stick as if covered with pitch, and suffer itself to relapse into bondage. We must awaken Paris, my friends; Paris must not sleep."

And on the night of the 4th of October, Paris had not slept, for the agitators had kept it awake. The watch-cry had been: "The bakers must not bake to-night! Paris must to-morrow morning be without bread, that the people may open their eyes again and awake. The bakers must not bake to-night!"

All the clubs had caught up their watch-cry, and their emissaries had spread it through the whole city, that all the bakers should be informed that whoever should "open his store in the morning, or give any other answer than this: 'There is no more meal in Paris; we have not been able to bake!' will be regarded as a traitor to the national cause, and as such, will be punished. Be on your guard!"

The bakers had been intimidated by this threat, and had not baked. When Paris awoke on the morning of the 5th of October, it was without bread. People lacked their most indispensable article of food.

At the outset, the women, who received these dreadful tidings at the bake-shops, returned dumb with horror to their families, to announce to their households and their hungry children: "There is no bread to-day! The supply of flour is exhausted! We must starve! There is no more bread to be had!"

And from the dark abode of the poor, the sad cry sounded out into the narrow and dirty streets and all the squares, "Paris contains no bread! Paris must starve!"

The women, the children uttered these cries in wild tones of despair. The men repeated the words with clinched fists and with threatening looks: "Paris contains no more bread! Paris must starve!"

"And do you know why Paris must starve?" croaked out a voice into the ears of the people who were crowding each other in wild confusion on the Place de Carrousel. "Do you know who is the cause of all this misery and want?"

"Tell us, if you know!" cried a rough man's voice.

"Yes, yes, tell us!" shouted other voices. "We want to know!"

"I will tell you," answered the first, in rasping tones; and now upon the stones, which indicated where the carriage-road crossed the square, a little, shrunken, broad-shouldered figure, with an unnaturally large head, and ugly, crafty face, could be seen.

"Marat!" cried some man in the crowd. "Marat!" yelled the cobbler Simon, who had been since August the friend and admirer of Marat, and was to be seen everywhere at his side. "Listen, friends, listen! Marat is going to speak to us; he will tell us how it happens that Paris has bread no more, and that we shall all have to starve together! Marat is going to speak!"

"Silence, silence!" scattered men commanded here and there. "Silence!" ejaculated a gigantic woman, with broad, defiant face, around which her black hair hung in dishevelled masses, and which was gathered up in partly-secured knots under her white cap. With her broad shoulders and her robust arms she forced her way through the crowd, directing her course toward the place where Marat was standing, and near him Simon the cobbler, on whose broad shoulders, as upon a desk, Marat was resting one hand.

"Silence!" cried the giantess. "Marat, the people's friend, is going to speak! Let us listen, for it will certainly do us good. Marat is clever and wise, and loves the people!"

Marat's green, blazing eyes fixed themselves upon the gigantic form of the woman; he shrank back as if an electrical spark had touched him, and with a wonderful expression of mingled triumph and joy.

"Come nearer, goodwife!" he exclaimed; "let me press your hand, and bring all the excellent, industrious, well-minded women of Paris to take Marat, the patriot, by the hand!"

The woman strode to the place where Marat was standing and reached him her hand. No one in the crowd noticed that this hand of unwonted delicacy and whiteness did not seem to comport well with the dress of a vender of vegetables from the market; no one noticed that on one of the tapering fingers a jewel of no ordinary size glistened.

Marat was the only one to notice it, and while pressing the offered hand of the woman in his bony fist, he stooped down and whispered in her ear:

"Monseigneur, take this jewelled ring off, and do not press forward too much, you might be identified!"

"I be identified!" answered the woman, turning pale. "I do not understand you, Doctor Marat!"

"But I do," whispered Marat, still more softly, for he saw that Simon's little sparkling eyes were turned toward the woman with a look of curiosity. "I understand the Duke Philip d'Orleans very well. He wants to rouse up the people, but he is unwilling to compromise his name or his title. And that may be a very good thing. But you are not to disown yourself before Marat, for Marat is your very good friend, and will keep your secret honorably."

"What are you whispering about?" shouted Simon. "Why do you not speak to the people? You were going to tell us why Paris has no bread, and who is to blame that we must all starve."

"Yes, yes, that is what you were going to tell us!" was shouted on all sides. "We want to know it."

"Tell us, tell us!" cried the giantess. "Give me your hand once more, that I may press it in the name of all the women of Paris!"

Marat with an assuring smile reached his great, bony hand to the woman, who held it in both of her own for a moment, and then retreated and was lost in the crowd.

But in Marat's hand now blazed the jewelled ring which had a moment before adorned the large, soft hand of the woman. He, perhaps, did not know it himself; he paid no attention to it, but turned all his thoughts to the people who now filled the immense square, and hemmed him in with thousands upon thousands of blazing eyes.

"You want to know why you have no bread?" snarled he. "You ask why you starve? Well, my friends and brothers, the answer is an easy one to give. The baker of France has shut up his storehouse because the baker's wife has told him to do so, because she hates the people and wants them to starve! But she does not intend to starve, and so she has called the baker and the little apprentices to Versailles, where are her storehouses, guarded by her paid soldiers. What does it concern her if the people of Paris are miserably perishing? She has an abundance of bread, for the baker must always keep his store open for her, and her son eats cake, while your children are starving! You must always keep demanding that the baker, the baker's wife, and the whole brood come to Paris and live in your midst, and then you will see how they keep their flour, and you will then compel them to give you of their superfluous supplies."

"Yes, we will make her come!" cried Simon the cobbler, with a coarse laugh. "Up, brothers, up! We must compel the baker and his wife to open the flour-store to us!"

"Let us go to Versailles!" roared the great woman, who had posted herself among a group of fishwives. "Come, my friends, let us go to Versailles, and we will tell the baker's wife that our children have no bread, while she is giving her apprentices cakes. We will demand of her that she give our children bread, and if she refuses it, we will compel her to come with her baker and her whole brood to Paris and starve with us! Come, let us go to Versailles!"

"Yes, yes, let us go to Versailles!" was the hideous cry which echoed across the square; "the baker's wife shall give us bread!"

"She keeps the keys to the stores!" howled Marat, "she prevents the baker opening them."

"She shall give us the keys!" yelled the great woman. "All the mothers and all the women of Paris must go to Versailles to the baker's wife!"

"All mothers, all women to Versailles!" resounded in a thousand-voiced chorus over the square, and then through the streets, and then into the houses.

And all the mothers and wives caught up these thundering cries, which came to them like unseen voices from the air, commissioning them to engage in a noble, an exalted mission, calling to them to save Paris and procure bread for their children.

"To Versailles, to Versailles! All mothers and women to Versailles!"

Who was able to resist obeying this command, which no one had given, which was heard by no single ear, yet was intelligible to every heart—who could resist it?

The men had stormed the Bastile, the women must storm the heart of the baker's wife in Versailles, till it yield and give to the children of the poor the bread for which they hunger.

"Up, to Versailles! All wives and mothers!"

The cry sweeps like a hurricane through the streets, and everywhere finds an echo in the maddened, panic-stricken, despairing, raging hearts of the women who see their children hunger, and suffer hunger themselves.

"The baker's wife feeds her apprentices with cakes, and we have not a crumb of bread to give to our poor little ones!"

In whole crowds the women dashed into the largest squares, where were the men who fomented the revolution, Marat, Danton, Santerre, Chaumette, and all the rest, the speakers at the clubs; there they are, giving their counsels to the maddened women, and spurring them on!

"Do not be afraid, do not be turned aside! Go to Versailles, brave women! Save your children, your husbands, from death by starvation! Compel the baker's wife to give bread to you and for us all! And if she conceals it from you, storm her palace with violence; there will be men there to help you. Only be brave and undismayed, God will go with mothers who are bringing bread to their children, and your husbands will protect you!"

They were brave and undismayed, the wives and mothers of Paris. In broad streams they rushed on; they broke over every thing which was in their way; they drew all the women into their seething ranks. "To Versailles! To Versailles!"

It was to no avail that De Bailly, the mayor of Paris, encountered the women on the street, and urged them with pressing words to return to their families and their work, and assured them that the bakers had already opened their shops, and had been ordered to bake bread. It was in vain that the general of the National Guard, Lafayette, had a discussion with the women, and tried to show them how vain and useless was their action.

Louder and louder grew the commanding cry, "To Versailles! We will bring the baker and his wife to Paris! To Versailles!"

The crowds of women grew more and more dense, and still mightier was the shout, "To Versailles!"

Bailly went with pain to General Lafayette. "We must pacify them, or you, general, must prevent them by force!"

"It is impossible," replied Lafayette. "How could we use force against defenceless women? Not one of my soldiers would obey my commands, for these women are the wives, the mothers, the sisters of my soldiers! They have no other weapons than their tongues with which to storm the heart of the queen! How could we conquer them with weapons of steel? We must let them go! But we must take precautions that the king and the queen do not fall into danger."

"That will be all the more necessary, general, as the women will certainly be accompanied by armed crowds of men, and excitement and confusion will accompany them all the way to Versailles. Make haste, general, to defend Versailles. The columns of women are already in motion, and, as I have said to you, they will be accompanied by armed men!"

"It would not be well for me to take my soldiers to Versailles," said Lafayette, shaking his head. "You know, M. de Bailly, to what follies the reactionaries of Versailles have already led the royal family. All Paris speaks of nothing else than of the holiday which the king and queen have given to the royal troops, the regiment of Flanders, which they have summoned to Versailles. The king and the queen, with the dauphin, were present. The tri-colored cockade was trodden under foot, and the people were arrayed in white ribbons. Royalist songs were sung, the National Guard was bitterly talked of, and an oath was given to the king and queen that commands would only be received of *them*. My soldiers are exasperated, and many of my officers have desired of me to-day that we should repair to Versailles and attack the regiment of Flanders and decimate them. It is, therefore, perilous to take these exasperated National Guards to Versailles."

"And yet something must be done for the protection of the king," said Bailly; "believe me, these raging troops of women are more dangerous than the exasperated National Guards. Come, General Lafayette, we will go to the city hall, and summon the magistracy and the leaders of the National Guard, to take counsel of them."

An hour later the drums beat through all the streets of Paris, for in the city hall the resolve had been taken that the National Guard of Paris, under the lead of General Lafayette, should repair to Versailles to protect the royal family against the attacks of the people, but at the same time to protect the National Assembly against the attacks of the royalist troops.

But long before the troops were in motion, and had really begun their march to Versailles, the troops of women were already on their way. Soldiers of the National Guard and armed men from the people accompanied the women, and secured among them a certain military discipline. They marched in ten separate columns, every one of which consisted of more than a thousand women. Each column was preceded by some soldiers of the National Guard, with weapons on their shoulders, who, of their own free will, had undertaken to be the leaders. On both sides of each column marched the armed men from the people, in order to inspire the women with courage when they grew tired, but at the same time to compel those who were weary of the long journey, or sick of the whole undertaking, and who wanted to return to Paris, to come back into the ranks and complete what they had begun, and carry the work of revolution still further. "On to Versailles!"

All was quiet in Versailles that day. No one suspected

MARCH OF THE FISH WOMEN TO VERSAILLES

the horrors which it was to bring forth. The king had gone with some of his gentlemen to Meudon to hunt: the queen had gone to Trianon alone—all alone!

No one of her friends was now at her side, she had lost them all. No one was there to share the misery of the queen of all who had shared her happiness. The Duchess de Polignac, the princesses of the royal house, the cheery brother of the king, Count d'Artois, the Count de Coigny, Lords Besenval and Lauzun, where are they all now, the friends, the suppliants of former days? Far, far away in distant lands, flown from the misfortune that, with its dark wings sinking, was hovering lower and lower over Versailles, and darkening with its uncanny shadows this Trianon which had once been so cheerful and bright. All now is desolate and still! The mill rattles no more, the open window is swung to and fro by the wind, and the miller no more looks out with his good-natured, laughing face; the miller of Trianon is no longer the king, and the burdens and cares of his realm have bowed his head. The school-house, too, is desolate, and the learned master no longer writes his satires and jokes upon the great blackboard in the school-room. He now writes libels and pamphlets, but they are now directed against the queen, against the former mistress of Trianon. And there is the fish-pond, along whose shores the sheep used to pasture, where the courtly company, transformed into shepherds and shepherdesses, used to lie on the grass, singing songs, arranging tableaux, and listening to the songs which the band played behind the thicket. All now is silent. No joyous tone now breaks the melancholy stillness which fills the shady pathways of the grove where Marie Antoinette, the mistress of Trianon, now walks with bended head and heart-broken spirit; only the recollection of the past resounds as an echo in her inner ear, and revives the cheerful strains which long have been silent.

At the fish-pond all is still, no flocks grazing on the shore, no picturesque groups, no songs. The spinning-wheel no longer whirls, the hand of the queen no longer turns the spindle; she has learned to hold the sceptre and the pen, and to weave public policy, and not a net of linen. The trees with their variegated autumn foliage are reflected in the dark water of the pond; some weeping-willows droop with their tapering branches down to the water, and a few swans come slowly sailing across with their necks raised in their majestic fashion. As they saw the figure on the shore, they expanded their wings and sailed quicker on, to pick up the crumbs which the white hands of the queen used to throw to them.

But these hands have to-day no gifts for the solitary, forgotten swans. All the dear, pleasant customs of the past are forgotten, they have all ceased.

Yet the swans have not forgotten her; they sail unquietly hither and thither along the shore of the pond, they toss up their slender necks, and then plunge their red beaks down into the dark water seeking for the grateful bits which were not there. But when they saw that they were disappointed, they poured forth their peculiarly mournful song and slowly sailed away down the lakelet into the obscurity of the distance, letting their complaining notes be heard from time to time.

"They are singing the swan's song of my happiness," whispered the queen, looking with tearful eyes at the beautiful creatures. "They too turn away from me, and now I am alone, all alone."

She had spoken this loudly, and her quivering voice wakened the echo which had been artistically contrived there, to repeat cheery words and merry laughter.

"Alone!" sounded back from the walls of the Marlborough Tower at the end of the fish-pond. "Alone!" whispered the water stirred with the swans. "Alone!" was the rustling cry of the bushes. "Alone!" was heard in the heart of the queen, and she sank down upon the grass, covered her face with her hands, and wept aloud.

All at once there was a cry in the distance, "The queen, where is the queen?"

Marie Antoinette sprang up and dried her eyes. No one should see that she had wept. Tears belong only to solitude, but she has no longer even solitude.

The voice comes nearer and nearer, and Marie Antoinette follows the sound. She knows that she is going to meet a new misfortune. People have not come to Trianon to bring her tidings of joy; they have come to tell her that destruction awaits her in Versailles, and the queen is to give audience to it.

A man came with hurried step from the thicket down the winding footpath. Marie Antoinette looked at him with eager, sharp eye. Who is he, this herald of misfortune? No one of the court servants, no one of the gentry. He wears the simple garments of a citizen, a man of the people, of that Third Estate which has prepared for the poor queen so much trouble and sorrow.

He had perhaps read her question in her face, for, as he now sank breathless at her feet, his lips murmured: "Forgive me, your majesty, forgive me that I disturb you. I am Toulan, your most devoted servant, and it is Madame de Campan who sends me."

"Toulan, yes, I recognize you now," said the queen, hastily. "It was you, was it not, who brought me the sad news of the acquittal of Rohan?"

"It appears, your majesty, that a cruel misfortune has always chosen me to be the bearer of evil tidings to my exalted queen. And to-day I come only with such."

"What is it?" cried the queen, eagerly. "Has any thing happened to my husband? Are my children threatened? Speak quickly, say no or yes. Let me know the whole truth at once. Is the king dead? Are my children in danger?"

"No, your majesty."

"No," cried the queen, breathing a breath of relief. "I thank you, sir. You see that you accused Fate falsely, for you have brought me good tidings. And yet again I thank you, for, I remember, I have much to thank you for. It was you who raised your voice in the National Assembly, and voted for the inviolability of the queen. It was not your fault, and believe me not mine either, that your voice was alone, that no one joined you. The king has been declared inviolable, but not the queen, and now I am to be attacked, am I not? Tell me what is it? Why does my faithful Campan send you to me?"

"Your majesty, to conjure you to come to Versailles."

"What has happened there?"

"Nothing as yet, your majesty, but—I was early this morning in Paris, and what I saw there determined me to come hither at once, to bring the news and warn your majesty."

"What is it? Why do you hesitate? Speak out freely."

"Your majesty, all Paris is in motion, all Paris is marching upon Versailles!"

"What do you mean by that?" asked Marie Antoinette, passionately. "What does Paris want? Does it mean to threaten the National Assembly? Explain yourself, for you see I do not understand you."

"Your majesty, the people of Paris hunger. The bakers have made no bread, for they assert that there is no more meal. The enemies of the realm have taken advantage of the excitement to stir up the masses and even the women. The people are hungry; the people are coming to Versailles to ask the king for bread. Ten thousand women are on the road to Versailles, accompanied by armed bodies of men."

'Let us hasten, sir, I must go to my children," said the queen, and with quick steps she went forward. Not a glance back, not a word of farewell to the loved plantation of Trianon, and yet it is the last time that Marie Antoinette is to look upon it. She will never return hither, she turns her back forever upon Trianon.

With flying steps she hurries on; Toulan does not venture to address her, and she has perhaps entirely forgotten his presence. She does not know that a faithful one is near her; she only knows that her children are in Versailles, and that she must go to them to protect them, and to the king too, to die with him, if it must be.

When they were not far from the great mall of the park at Versailles, the Count de St. Priest came running, and his frightened looks and pale face confirmed the news that Mr. Toulan had brought.

"Your majesty," cried the count, breathless, "I took the liberty of looking for your majesty at Trianon. Bad news has arrived."

"I know it," answered the queen, calmly. "Ten thousand women are marching upon Versailles, Mr. Toulan has informed me, and you see I am coming to receive the women."

All at once she stood still and turned to Toulan, who was walking behind her like the faithful servant of his mistress.

"Sir," said she, "I thank you, and I know that I may reckon upon you. I am sure that to-day as always you have thought upon our welfare, and that you will remain mindful of the oath of fidelity which you once gave me. Farewell! Do you go to the National Assembly. I will go to the palace, and may we each do our duty." She saluted Toulan with a gentle inclination of her head and with beaming looks of gratitude in her beautiful eyes, and then hurried on up the grand mall to the palace.

In Versailles all was confusion and consternation. Every one had lost his senses. Every one asked, and no one answered, for the only one who could answer, the king, was not there. He had not yet returned from the hunt in Meudon.

But the queen was there, and with a grand calmness and matchless grasp of mind she undertook the duties of the king. First, she sent the chief equerry, the Marquis de Cubières, to meet the king and cause him to hasten home at once. She intrusted Count St. Priest, minister of the interior, with a division of the guards in the inner court of the palace. She inspired the timid women with hope. She smiled at her children, who, timid and anxious at the confusion which surrounded them, fled to the queen for refuge, and clung to her.

Darker and darker grew the reports that came meanwhile to the palace. They were the storm-birds, so to speak, that precede the tempest. They announced the near approach of the people of Paris, of the women, who were no longer unarmed, and who had been joined by thousands of the National Guard, who, in order to give the train of women a more imposing appearance, had brought two cannon with them, and who, armed with knives and guns, pikes and axes, and singing wild war-songs, were marching on as the escort of the women.

The queen heard all without alarm, without fear. She commanded the women, who stood around her weeping and wringing their hands, to withdraw to their own apartments, and protect the dauphin and the princess, to lock the doors behind them and to admit no one—no one, excepting herself.

She took leave of the children with a kiss, and bade them be fearless and untroubled. She did not look at them as the women took them away. She breathed firmly as the doors closed behind them.

"Now I have courage to bear every thing," she said to St. Priest. "My children are in safety! Would only that the king were here!"

At the same instant the door opened and the king entered. Marie Antoinette hastened to meet him, threw herself with a cry of joy into his arms, and rested her head, which had before been erect with courage, heavily on his shoulder.

"Oh, sire, my dear sire! thank God that you are here. Now I fear nothing more! You will not suffer us to perish in misery! You will breathe courage into these despairing ones, and tell the inexperienced what they have to do. Sire, Paris is marching against us, but with us there are God and France. You will defend the honor of France and your crown against the rebels?"

The king answered confusedly, and as if in a yielding frame of mind. "We must first hear what the people want," he said; "we must not approach them threateningly, we must first discuss matters with them."

"Sire," answered the queen, in amazement, "to discuss with the rebels now is to imply that they are in the right, and you will not, you cannot do that!"

"I will consult with my advisers," said the king, pointing at the ministers, who, summoned by St. Priest, were then entering the room.

But what a consultation was that! Every one made propositions, and yet no one knew what to do. No one would take the responsibility of the matter upon himself, and yet every one felt that the danger increased every minute. But what to do? That was the question which no one was able to answer, and before which the king was mute. Not so the queen, however.

"Sire!" cried she, with glowing cheeks, "sire, you have to save the realm, and to defend it from revolution. The contest is here, and we cannot withdraw from it. Call your guards, put yourself at their head, and allow me to remain at your side. We ought not to yield to revolution, and if we cannot control it, we should suffer it to enter the palace of the kings of France only over our dead bodies. Sire, we must either live as kings, or know how to die as kings!"

But Louis replied to this burst of noble valor in a brave woman's soul, only with holding back and timidity. Plans were made and cast aside. They went on deliberating till the wild yells of the people were heard even within the palace.

The queen, pale and yet calm, had withdrawn to the adjoining apartment. There she leaned against the door and listened to the words of the ministers, and to the new reports which were all the time coming in from the streets.

The crowd had reached Versailles, and was streaming through the streets of the city in the direction of the palace. The National Guard of Versailles had fraternized with the Parisians. Some scattered soldiers of the royal guard had been threatened and insulted, and even dragged from their horses!

The queen heard all, and heard besides the consultation of the king and his ministers—still coming to no decisive results, doubting and hesitating, while the fearful crisis was advancing from the street.

Already musket-shots were heard on the great square in front of the palace, wild cries, and loud, harsh voices. Marie Antoinette left her place at the door and hurried to the window, where a view could be had of the whole square.

She saw the dark dust-cloud which hung over the road to Paris; she saw the unridden horses, running in advance of the crowd, their riders, members of the royal guard, having been killed; she heard the raging discords, which surged up to the palace like a wave driven by the wind; she saw this black, dreadful wave sweep along the Paris road, roaring as it went.

What a fearful mass! Howling, shrieking women, with loosened hair, and with menacing gestures, extended their naked arms toward the palace defiantly, their eyes flaming, their mouths overflowing with curses. Wild men's figures, with torn blouses, the sleeves rolled up over dusty and dirty arms, and bearing pikes, knives, and guns, here and there members of the National Guard marching with them arm in arm, pressed on toward the palace. Sometimes shrieks and yells, sometimes coarse peals of laughter, or threatening cries, issued from the confused crowd.

Nearer and nearer surged the dreadful wave of destruction to the royal palace. Now it has reached it. Maddened fists pounded upon the iron gates before the inner court, and threatening voices demanded entrance; hundreds and hundreds of women shrieked with wild gestures: "We want to come in! We want to speak with the baker! We will eat the queen's guts if we cannot get any thing else to eat!"

And thousands upon thousands of women's voices repeated—"Yes, we will eat the queen's guts, if we get nothing else to eat!"

Marie Antoinette withdrew from the window; her bearing was grave and defiant, a laugh of scorn played over her proudly-drawn-up upper-lip, her head was erect, her step decisive, dignified.

She went again to the king and his ministers. "Sire," said she, "the people are here. It is now too late to supplicate them, as you wanted to do. Nothing remains for you except to defend yourself, and to save the crown for your son the dauphin, even if it falls from your own head."

"It remains for us," answered the king, gravely, "to bring the people back to a sense of duty. They are deceived about us. They are excited. We will try to conciliate them, and to show them our fatherly interest in them."

The queen stared in amazement at the pleasant, smiling face of the king; then, with a loud cry of pain, which escaped from her breast like the last gasp of a dying man, she turned around, and went up to the Prince de Luxemburg, the captain of the guard, who just then entered the hall.

"Do you come to tell us that the people have taken the palace?" cried the queen, with an angry burst from her very soul.

"Madame," answered the prince, "had that been the case, I should not have been here alive. Only over my body will the rabble enter the palace."

"Ah," muttered Marie Antoinette to herself, "there are men in Versailles yet, there are brave men yet to defend us!"

"What news do you bring, captain?" asked the king, stepping up.

"Sire, I am come to receive your commands," answered the prince, bowing respectfully. "This mob of shameless shrews is growing more maddened, more shameless every moment. Thousands and thousands of arms are trying the gates, and guns are fired with steady aim at the guards. I beg your majesty to empower me to repel this attack of mad women!"

"What an idea, captain!" cried Louis, shrugging his shoulders. "Order to attack a company of women! You are joking, prince!" *

And the king turned to Count de la Marck, who was entering the room. "You come with new news. What is it, count?"

"Sire, the women are most desirous of speaking with your majesty, and presenting their grievances."

"I will hear them," cried the king, eagerly. "Tell the women to choose six of their number and bring them into my cabinet. I will go there myself."

"Sire, you are going to give audience to revolution," cried Marie Antoinette, seizing the arm of the king, who was on the point of leaving the room. "I conjure you, my husband, do not be overpowered by your magnanimous heart! Let not the majesty of the realm be defiled by the raging hands of these furies! Remain here. Oh, sire, if my prayers, my wishes have any power with you, remain here! Send a minister to treat with these women in your name. But do not confront their impudence with the dignity of the crown. Sire, to give them audience is to give audience to revolution; and from the hour when it takes place, revolution has gained the victory over the kingly authority! Do not go, oh do not go!"

"I have given my word," answered Louis, gently. "I have sent word to the women that I would receive them, and they shall not say that the first time they set foot in the palace of their king, they were deceived by him. And see, there comes the count to take me!"

And the king followed with hasty step Count de la Marck, who just then appeared at the door.

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* The king's own words.—See Weber, "Mémoires," vol. i., p. 433.

Six women of wild demeanor, with dusty, dirty clothes, their hair streaming out from their round white caps, were assembled in the cabinet of the king, and stared at him with defiant eyes as he entered. But his gentle demeanor and pleasant voice appeared to surprise them; and Louise Chably, the speaker, who had selected the women, found only timid, modest words, with which to paint to the king the misfortune, the need, and the pitiable condition of the people, and with which to entreat his pity and assistance.

"Ah, my children," answered the king with a sigh, "only believe me, it is not my fault that you are miserable, and I am still more unhappy than you. I will give directions to Corbeil and D'Estampes, the controllers of the grain-stores, to give out all that they can spare. If my commands had always been obeyed, it would be better with us all! If I could do every thing, could see to it that my commands were everywhere carried into effect, you would not be unhappy; and you must confess, at least, that your king loves you as a father his children, and that nothing lies so closely at his heart as your welfare. Go, my children, and tell your friends to prove worthy of the love of their king, and to return peaceably to Paris." *

"Long live the king! Long live our father!" cried the touched and pacified women, as trembling and with tears in their eyes, they left the royal cabinet, in order to go to the women below, and announce to them what the king had said.

But the royal words found no response among the excited masses.

"We are hungry, we want bread," shouted the women. "We are not going to live on words any more. The king shall give us bread, and then we shall see it proved that he loves us like a father; then we will go back to Paris. If the baker believes that he can satisfy us with words and fine speeches, he is mistaken."

"If he has no bread, he shall give us his wife to eat!" roared a man with a pike in his hand and a red cap on his head. "The baker's wife has eaten up all our bread, and it is no more than fair that we should eat her up now."

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* The king's own words.—See A. de Beauchesne, "Louis XVI., sa Vie, son Agonie," etc., vol. i., p. 48.

"Give us the heart of the queen," was now the cry, "give us the heart of the queen!"

Marie Antoinette heard the words, but she appeared not to be alarmed. With dignity and composure, she cast a look at the ministers and gentlemen, who, pale and speechless, had gathered around the royal couple.

"I know that this crowd has come from Paris to demand my head! I learned of my mother not to fear death, and I shall meet it with courage and steadfastness." *

And firmly and fearlessly Marie Antoinette remained all this dreadful evening, which was now beginning to overshadow Versailles. Outside of the palace raged the uproar; revolutionary songs were sung; veiled forms, the leaders of the revolution, stole around, and fired the people with new rage against the baker and the baker's wife. Torches were lighted to see by, and the blood-red glare shone into the faces there, and tended to exasperate them still more. What dances were executed by the women, with torches in their hands! and the men roared in accompaniment, ridiculing the king and threatening the queen with death.

At times the torches threw their flickering glare into the windows of the palace, where were the ministers and servants of the king, in silent horror. Among all those counsellors of the king, there was at this time but one Man, Marie Antoinette! She alone preserved her steadfastness and discretion; she spoke to every one friendly, inspiriting words. She roused up the timid; at times she even attempted to bring the king to some decisive action, and yet she did not complain when she found herself unable to do so.

Once her face lighted up in hope and joy. That was when a company of deputies, headed by Toulan, entered the hall, to offer their services to the royal couple, and to ask permission to be allowed to remain around the king and queen.

But scarcely had this request been granted, when both the secretaries of the president of the National Assembly entered, warning the members, in the name of the president, to return at once to the hall and to take part in the night session which was to be held.

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* **The words of the queen.—See "Histoire de Marie Antoinette," p. 194.**

"They call our last friends away from us," murmured the queen, "for they want us to be entirely defenceless!"

All at once the cries on the square below were more violent and loud; musket-shots were heard; at the intervals between rose the thousand-voiced clamor, and at one time the thunder of a cannon. There was a rush of horses, and clash of arms, more musket-shots, and then the cry of the wounded.

The king had withdrawn to hold a last consultation with his ministers and a few faithful friends. At this fearful noise, this sound of weapons, this shout of victory, his first thought was of the queen. He rose quickly and entered the hall.

No one was there; the red glare of the torches was thrown from below into the deserted room, and showed upon the wall wondrous shadows of contorted human figures, with clinched fists and with raised and threatening arms.

The king walked hastily through the fearfully illuminated hall, called for the queen with a loud voice, burst into the cabinet, then into her sleeping-room, but no Marie Antoinette was to be found—no one gave reply to the anxious call of the king.

More dreadful grew the wild shrieks and howls, the curses and maledictions which came in from without.

The king sprang up the little staircase which led to the rooms of the children, and dashed through the antechamber, where the door was open that led to the dauphin's sleeping-room.

And here Louis stood still, and looked with a breath of relief at the group which met his tearful eyes. The dauphin was lying in his bed fast asleep, with a smile on his face. Marie Antoinette stood erect before the bed in an attitude of proud composure.

"Marie," said the king, deeply moved—"Marie, I was looking for you."

The queen slowly turned her head toward him and pointed at the sleeping prince.

"Sire," answered she calmly, "I was at my post." *

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* This conversation, as well as this whole scene, is historical.—See Beauchesne's "Louis XVII.," vol. i.

Louis, overcome by the sublimity of a mother's love, hastened to his wife and locked her in his arms.

"Remain with me, Marie," he said. "Do not leave me. Breathe your courage and your decision into me."

The queen sighed and sadly shook her head. She had not a word of reproach; she did not say that she no longer believed in the courage and decision of the king, but she had no longer any hope.

But the doors of the room now opened. Through one came the maids of the queen and the governess of the dauphin; through the other, some gentlemen of the court, to call the king back into the audience-hall.

After the first panic, every one had come back to consciousness again, and all vied in devoting themselves to the king and the queen. The gentlemen brought word that something new had occurred, and that this was the cause of the dreadful tumult below upon the square. The National Guard of Paris had arrived; they had fraternized with the National Guard of Versailles, and with the people; they had been received by the women with shouts of applause, and by the men with a volley of musket-shots in salutation. General Lafayette had entered the palace to offer his services to the king, and he now asked for an audience.

"Come, madame," said Louis quickly, cheered up, "let us receive the general. You see that things are not so bad with us as you think. We have faithful servants yet to hasten to our assistance."

The queen made no reply. Quietly she followed the king into the hall, in which Lafayette, surrounded by the ministers and gentlemen, was standing. On the entrance of the royal couple, the general advanced to meet them with a reverential salutation.

"Sire," said Lafayette, with cheerful confidence—"sire, I have come to protect your majesties and the National Assembly against all those who shall venture to threaten you."

"Are you assured of the fidelity and trustworthiness of your troops?" asked the queen, whose flaming eyes rested upon Lafayette's countenance as if she wanted to read his utmost thoughts.

But these eyes did not confuse the cheerful calmness of the general.

"I know, madame, that I can rely upon the fidelity of my soldiers," answered he, confidently. "They are devoted to me to the death, and as I shall command them, they will watch over the security of the king and queen, and keep all injury from them."

The queen detected the touch of scorn in these loud-sounding words, but she pretended to believe them. At last she really did believe them, for Lafayette repeated emphatically that from this time nothing more was to be feared for the royal family, and that all danger was past. The guard should be chosen this night from his own troops; the Paris National Guard should restore peace again in Versailles, and keep an eye upon the crowds which had encamped upon the great square before the palace.

Lafayette promised well for his army, for the howling, shrieking women, for the cursing, raging men.

And the king was satisfied with these assurances of General Lafayette, and so, too, was Marie Antoinette at last. Louis ordered the *garde du corps* to march to Rambouillet, and reserved only the necessary sentinels in the palace. In the immediate neighborhood the soldiers of Lafayette were stationed. The general once more made the rounds, and then, as if every thing was in a position of the greatest security, he went into the palace to spend the night there, and in peaceful slumbers to refresh himself for the labors of the day.

The king, too, had retired to his apartments, and the valets who had assisted his majesty to undress had not left the sleeping-room, when the loud, uniform breathing which issued from the silken curtains of the bed told them that the king had already fallen asleep. The queen, too, had gone to rest, and while laying her wearied and heavy head upon the cushions, she tenderly besought both her maids to lie down too. All was quiet now in the dark palace of Versailles. The king and the queen slept.

But through the dark, deserted halls which that day had witnessed so much pain and anxiety, resounded now the clang of the raging, howling voices which came up from the square, and hurled their curses against the queen.

In the palace of Versailles they were asleep, but without, before the palace, Uproar and Hate kept guard, and with wild thoughts of murder stalked around the palace of the Kings of France.

How soon were these thoughts to become fact! Sleep, Marie Antoinette, sleep! One last hour of peace and security!

One last hour! Before the morning dawns Hate will awaken thee, and Murder's terrible voice will resound through the halls of the Kings of France!

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NIGHT OF HORROR.

MARIE ANTOINETTE slept! The fearful excitement of the past day and of the stormy evening, crowded with its events, had exhausted the powers of the queen, and she had fallen into that deep, dreamless sleep which sympathetic and gracious Nature sometimes sends to those whom Fate pursues with suffering and peril.

Marie Antoinette slept! In the interior of the palace a deep calm reigned, and Lafayette had withdrawn from the court in order to sleep too. But below, upon this court, Revolution kept her vigils, and glared with looks of hatred and vengeance to the dark walls behind which the queen was sleeping.

The crown of France had for centuries sinned so much, and proved false so much, that the love of the people had at last been transformed into hate. The crown had so long sown the wind, that it could not wonder if it had to reap the whirlwind. The crimes and innovations which Louis XIV. and Louis XV. had sown upon the soil of France, had created an abyss between the crown and the people, out of which revolution must arise to avenge those crimes and sins of the past upon the present. The sins of the fathers had to be visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation.

Marie Antoinette did not know it; she did not see the abyss which had opened between the crown and the people;

the courtiers and flatterers had covered it with flowers, and with the sounds of festivity the cries of a distressed people had been drowned.

Now the flowers were torn away, the festive sounds had ceased, and Marie Antoinette saw the abyss between the crown and the people; she heard the curses, the raging cries of these exasperated men, who had been changed from weak, obedient subjects into threatening, domineering rebels. She looked with steady eye down into the abyss, and saw the monster rise from the depths to destroy herself and her whole house; but she would not draw back, she would not yield. She would rather be dragged down and destroyed than meekly and miserably to make her way to the camp of her enemies, to take refuge with them. Better to die with the crown on her head than to live robbed of her crown in lowliness and in a subject condition.

Thus thought Marie Antoinette, as at the close of that dreadful day she went to rest; this was her prayer as she sank upon her couch:

"Give me power, O God, to die as a queen, if I can no longer live as a queen! And strengthen my husband, that he may not only be a good man, but a king too!"

With this prayer on her trembling lips, she had fallen asleep. But when Campan stole on tiptoe to the queen's bed to watch her mistress while she slept, Marie Antoinette opened her eyes again, and spoke in her friendly way to her devoted servant.

"Go to bed, Campan," said she, "and the second maid must lie down too. You all need rest after this evil day, and sleep is so refreshing. Go, Campan, good-night!"

Madame de Campan had to obey, and stepped out into the antechamber, where were the two other maids.

"The queen is asleep," she said, "and she has commanded us to go to rest too. Shall we do so?"

The two women answered only with a shake of the head and a shrug of the shoulders.

"I know very well that we are agreed," said Madame de Campan, reaching her hand to them. "For us there must be no sleep to-night, for we must watch the queen. Come, my friends, let us go into the antechamber. We shall find Mr. Varicourt, who will tell us what is going on outside."

On tiptoe the three women stole out into the second antechamber, which was lighted only with a couple of glimmering wax tapers, and in its desolate disorder, with the confusion of chairs, divans, and tables, brought back sad recollections of the wild women who had on the day before pressed into this apartment in their desire to speak with the queen. Somebody had told them that this was the antechamber of the queen, and they had withdrawn in order to go to the antechamber of the king. But they now knew the way that led to the apartments of the queen; they knew now that if one turned to the left side of the palace, he would come at once into the apartments occupied by the royal family, and that the queen occupied the adjacent rooms, directly behind the hall of the Swiss Guard.

Madame de Campan thought of this, as she cast her glance over this antechamber which adjoined the Swiss hall, and this thought filled her with horror.

Varicourt had not yet come in; nothing disturbed the silence around her, except the dreadful shouting and singing outside of the palace.

"Let us go back into the waiting-room," whispered her companions, "it is too gloomy here. Only hear how they shout and laugh! O God, it is a fearful night!"

"Yes, a fearful night," sighed Madame de Campan, "and the day that follows it may be yet more fearful. But we must not lose our courage. All depends upon our having decision, upon our defying danger, and defending our mistress. And see, there comes Mr. Varicourt," she continued, earnestly, as the door quickly opened, and an officer of the Swiss guard came in with great haste.

"Tell us, my friend, what news do you bring us?"

"Bad news," sighed Varicourt. "The crowd is increasing every moment. New columns have arrived from Paris, and not only the common people, but the speakers and agitators are here. Everywhere are groups listening to the dreadful speeches which urge on to regicide and revolution. It is a dreadful, horrible night. Treachery, hatred, wickedness around the palace, and cowardice and desertion pass out from the palace to them, and open the doors. Many of the royal soldiers have made common cause with the people, and walk arm in arm with them around the square."

"And what do these dreadful men want?" asked Campan. "Why do they encamp around the palace? What is their object?"

Mr. Varicourt sadly bowed his head, and a loud sigh came from his courageous breast. "They want what they shall never have while I am alive," he then said, with a decided look. "I have sworn fidelity to the king and queen, and I shall keep it to death. My duty calls me, for the hour of changing guards is near, and my post is below at the great staircase which leads up here. We shall meet at daylight, if I am then alive. But till then we shall do our duty. I shall guard the grand staircase, do you guard the sleeping-room of the queen."

"Yes, we will do our duty," answered Madame de Campan, extending her hand to him. "We will watch over those to whom we have devoted ourselves, and to whom we have vowed fidelity. No one shall pass into the chamber of the queen while we are alive, shall there?"

"Never," replied both of the women, with courageous decision.

"And no one shall ascend the great staircase so long as I live," said Varicourt. "Adieu now, ladies, and listen carefully to every sound. If a voice calls to you, 'It is time,' wake the queen and save her, for danger will then be right upon her. Hark, it is striking three, that is the hour of changing guard. Farewell!"

He went quickly to the door, but there he stood still, and turned once more around. His glance encountered that of his friend, and Madame de Campan understood its silent language well, for she hastened to him.

"You have something to say to me?"

"Yes," he whispered softly, "I have a presentiment that I shall not survive the horrors of this night. I have one whom I love, who, as you know, is betrothed to me. If I fall in the service of the king, I ask you to see my Cecilia, and tell her that I died with her name upon my lips! Tell her not to weep for me, but at the same time not to forget me. Farewell."

He hurriedly opened the door and hastened away. Madame de Campan repressed the tears which would fill her eyes, and turned to the two maids.

"Now," said she, with decisive tones, "let us return to the waiting-room and watch the door of the queen's chamber."

With a firm step she walked on, and the ladies followed. Without any noise they entered the little hall, where in the mornings those ladies of the court used to gather who had the right to be present while the queen dressed herself.

Madame de Campan locked the door through which they had entered, behind her, drew out the key and hid it in her pocket.

"No one will enter here with my will," said she. "Now we will place chairs before the door of the sleeping-room, and sit there. We shall then have erected a barricade before our queen, a wall which will be as strong as any other, for there beat three courageous hearts within it."

They sat down upon the chairs, whose high backs leaned against the door of the queen's room, and, taking one another's hands, began their hallowed watch.

All was still and desolate around them. No one of the women could break the silence with a word or a remark. With dumb lips, with open eyes, the three watchers sat and hearkened to the sounds of the night. At times, when the roaring without was uncommonly loud and wild, they pressed one another's hands, and spoke to one another in looks; but when the sounds died away, they turned their eyes once more to the windows and listened.

Slowly, dreadfully slowly moved the fingers of the great clock above on the chimney. Madame de Campan often fixed her gaze upon it, and it seemed to her as if time must have ceased to go on, for it appeared to be an eternity since Varicourt had taken leave of her, and yet the two longer fingers on the dial had not indicated the fourth hour after midnight. But the pendulum still continued its regular, even swinging; the time went forward; only every moment made the horror, the fear of unknown danger seem like an eternity!

At last, slowly, with calm stroke, the hour began to strike four o'clock. And amid the dreadful sounds outside the palace, the women could recognize the deep tones of the great clock on the Swiss hall. Four o'clock! One solitary, dreadful hour is passed! Three hours more, three eternities before daylight comes!

But hark! what new, fearful noise without? That is no more the sound of singing and shouting, and crying—that is the battle-cry—that is the rattle and clatter of muskets. The three women sprang up, moved as if by one thought, animated by one purpose. They moved the chairs back from the door, ready, as soon as danger should approach, to go into the chamber of the queen and awaken her. Campan then slipped across the room to the door of the antechamber, which she had locked before. She laid her ear to the key-hole, and listened. All was still and quiet in the next room; no one was in the antechamber. There was no immediate danger near, for Varicourt's voice had not yet uttered the cry of warning.

But more fearful grew the noise outside. The crackle of musketry was more noticeable, and every now and then there seemed to be heavy strokes as if directed against the palace, sounding as if the people were attempting to force the iron gate of the front court.

"I must know what is going on," whispered Campan, and with cool decision she put the key into the door, turned it, entered the antechamber, and flew to the window, where there was a view of the whole court; and a fearful sight met her there. The crowd had broken the gate, pressed into the court, and was surging in great masses toward the palace doors. Here and there torches threw their glare over these masses, disclosing men with angry gestures, and women with streaming hair, swinging their arms savagely, and seeming like a picture of hell, not to be surpassed in horror even by the phantasms of Dante. Women changed to furies and bacchanalians, roaring and shouting in their murderous desires; men, like bloodthirsty tigers, preparing to spring upon their prey, and give it the death-stroke; swinging pikes and guns, which gleamed horribly in the glare of the torches; arms and fists bearing threatening daggers and knives! All this was pressing on upon the palace—all these clinched fists would soon be engaged in hammering upon the walls which separated the king and queen from the people—the executioner from his victim!

All at once there rang out a fearful, thundering cry, which made the windows rattle, and called forth a terrible echo above in the deserted hall; for through all these shrieks and howls, there resounded now a piercing cry, such as only the greatest pain or the most instant need can extort from human lips.

"That was a death-cry," whispered Madame de Campan, trembling, and drawing back from the window. "They have certainly killed the Swiss guards, who are keeping the door; they will now pour into the palace. O God! what will become of Varicourt? I must know what is going on!"

She flew through the antechamber and opened the door of the Swiss hall. It was empty, but outside of it could be heard a confused, mixed mass of sounds, cries, and the tramping as of hundreds and hundreds of men coming on. Nearer and nearer came the sound, more distinct every moment. All at once the door was flung open on the other side of the Swiss hall, the door which led out, and Varicourt appeared in it, pushed backward by the raging, howling mass. He still sought to resist the oncoming tramp of these savage men, and, with a movement like lightning, putting his weapon across the door, he was able for one minute to hold the place against the tide—just so long as the arms which held the weapon had in them the pulse of life! Varicourt looked like a dying man; his uniform was torn and cut, his face deathly pale, and on one side disfigured by the blood which was streaming down from a broad wound in his forehead.

"It is time, it is time!" he cried, with a loud tremulous voice, and, as he saw for an instant the face of Campan at the opposite door, a flash of joy passed over his face.

"Save the queen! They will murder her!" *

Madame de Campan hastily closed the door, drew the great bolt, and then sprang through the antechamber into the waiting-room, and bolted its door too. Then, after she had done that—after she had raised this double wall between the sleeping queen and the raging mob—she sank upon her knees like one who was utterly crushed, and raised her folded hands to heaven.

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* Varicourt's last words.—See "Mémoires de Madame de Campan," vol. ii., p. 77.

"Have mercy on his soul, O God! take him graciously to heaven!" whispered she, with trembling lips.

"For whom are you praying?" asked the two women, in low voices, hurrying up to her. "Who is dead?"

"Mr. Varicourt," answered Campan, with a sigh. "I heard his death-cry, as I was bolting the door of the antechamber. But we cannot stop to weep and lament. We must save the queen!"

And she sprang up from her knees, flew through the room, and opened the door leading to the queen's chamber.

At that moment a fearful crash was heard, then a loud shout of triumph in the outer antechamber.

"The queen! We want the heart of the queen!"

"They have broken down the door of the antechamber—they are in the waiting-room!" whispered Campan. "There is no time to be lost. Come, friends, come!"

And she hastened to the bed of the queen, who was still lying in that heavy, unrefreshing sleep which usually follows exhaustion and intense excitement.

"Your majesty, your majesty, wake!"

"What is it, Campan?" asked Marie Antoinette, opening her eyes, and hastily sitting up in bed. "Why do you waken me? What has happened?"

The fearful sounds without, the crashing of the door of the little waiting-room, gave answer. The rough, hard voices of the exasperated women, separated now from the queen by only one thin door, quickly told all that had happened.

Marie Antoinette sprang from her bed. "Dress me quick, quick!"

"Impossible! There is no time. Only hear how the gunstocks beat against the door! They will break it down, and then your majesty is lost! The clothes on without stopping to fasten them! Now fly, your majesty, fly! Through the side-door—through the Œil de Bœuf!"

Madame de Campan went in advance; the two women supported the queen and carried her loose clothes, and then they flew on through the still and deserted corridors to the sleeping-room of the king.

It was empty—no one there!

"O God! Campan, where is the king? I must go to him. My place is by his side! Where is the king?"

"Here I am, Marie, here!" cried the king, who just then entered and saw the eager, anxious face of his wife. "I hurried to save our most costly possessions!"

He laid the dauphin, only half awake, and lying on his breast, in the arms which Marie Antoinette extended to him, and then led her little daughter to her, who had been brought in by Madame Tourzel.

"Now," said the king, calmly, "now that I have collected my dearest treasures, I will go and see what is going on."

But Marie Antoinette held him back. "There is destruction, treachery, and murder outside. Crime may break in here and overwhelm us, but we ought not to go out and seek it."

"Well," said the king, "we will remain here and await what comes."

And turning to his valet, who was then entering, Louis continued: "Bring me my chocolate, I want to take advantage of the time to breakfast, for I am hungry!"

"Sire, now? shall we breakfast now?" asked the queen, amazed.

"Why not?" answered Louis calmly. "If the body is strengthened, we look at every thing more composedly and confidently. You must take breakfast too, Marie, for who knows whether we shall find time for some hours after this?"

"I! oh, I need no breakfast," cried Marie Antoinette; and as she saw Louis eagerly taking a cup of chocolate from the hands of a valet, and was going to enjoy it, she turned away to repress the tears of anger and pain which in spite of herself pressed into her eyes.

"Mamma queen," cried the dauphin, who was yet in her arms, "I should like my breakfast too. My chocolate—I should like my chocolate too!"

The queen compelled herself to smile, carried the child to its father, and softly set him down on the king's knee.

"Sire," said she, "will the King of France teach his son to take breakfast, while revolution is thundering without, and breaking down, with treasonable hands, the doors of the royal palace? Campan, come here—help me arrange my toilet; I want to prepare myself to give audience to revolution!"

And withdrawing to a corner of the room, the queen finished her toilet, for which her women fortunately had in their flight brought the materials.

While the queen was dressing and the king breakfasting with the children, the cabinet of the king began to fill. All Louis's faithful servants, then the ministers and some of the deputies, had hurried to the palace to be at the side of the king and queen at the hour of danger.

Every one of them brought new tidings of horror. St. Priest told how he, entering the Swiss room, at the door leading into the antechamber of the queen, had seen the body of Varicourt covered with wounds. The Duke de Liancourt had seen a dreadful man, of gigantic size, with heavy beard, the arms of his blouse rolled up high, and bearing a heavy hatchet-knife in his hand, springing upon the person of the faithful Swiss, in order to sever his head from his body. The Count de Borennes had seen the corpse of the Swiss officer, Baron de Deshuttes, who guarded the iron gate, and whom the people murdered as they entered. The Marquis de Croissy told of the heroism with which another Swiss, Miomandre of St. Marie, had defended the door between the suites of the king and queen, and had gained time to draw the bolt and barricade the door. And during all these reports, and while the cabinet was filling more and more with pale men and women, the king went composedly on dispatching his breakfast.

The queen, who had long before completed her toilet, now went up to him, and with gentle, tremulous voice conjured him to declare what should be done—to come at last out of this silence, and to speak and act worthy of a king.

Louis shrugged his shoulders and set the replenished cup which he was just lifting to his mouth, on the silver waiter. At once the queen beckoned to the valet Hue to come up.

"Sir," said she, commandingly, "take these things out. The king has finished his breakfast."

Louis sighed, and with his eye followed the valet, who was carrying the breakfast into the garde-robe.

"Now, sire," whispered Marie Antoinette, "show yourself a king."

"My love," replied the king, quietly, "it is very hard to show myself a king when the people do not choose to regard me as one. Only hear that shouting and yelling, and then tell me what I can do as a king to bring these mad men to peace and reason?"

"Sire, raise your voice as king; tell them that you will avenge the crimes of this night, take the sword in your hand and defend the throne of your fathers and the throne of your son, and then you will see these rebels retire, and you will collect around you men who will be animated with fresh courage, and who will take new fire from your example. Oh, sire, disregard now the pleadings of your noble, gentle heart; show yourself firm and decided. Have no leniency for traitors and rebels!"

"Tell me what I shall do," murmured the king, with a sigh.

Marie Antoinette stooped down to his ear. "Sire," whispered she, "send at once to Vincennes, and the other neighboring places. Order the troops to come hither, collect an army, put yourself at its head, march on Paris, declare war on the rebellious capital, and you will march as conqueror into your recaptured city. Oh, only no yielding, no submission! Only give the order, sire; say that you will do so, and I will summon one of my faithful ones to give him orders to hasten to Vincennes."

And while the queen whispered eagerly to the king, her flashing glance sped across to Toulan, who, in the tumult, had found means to come in, and now looked straight at the queen. Now, as her glance came to him as an unspoken command, he made his way irresistibly forward through the crowd of courtiers, ministers, and ladies, and now stood directly behind the queen.

"Has your majesty orders for me?" he asked, softly.

She looked anxiously at the king, waiting for an answer, an order. But the king was dumb; in order not to answer his wife, he drew the dauphin closer to him and caressed him.

"Has your majesty commands for me?" asked Toulan once more.

Marie Antoinette turned to him, her eyes suffused with tears, and let Toulan see her face darkened with grief and despair.

"No," she whispered, "I have only to obey; I have no commands to give!"

"Lafayette," was now heard in the corridor—"General Lafayette is coming!"

The queen advanced with hasty steps toward the entering general.

"Sir," she cried, "is this the peace and security that you promised us, and for which you pledged your word? Hear that shouting without, see us as if beleaguered here, and then tell me how it agrees with the assurances which you made to me!"

"Madame, I have been myself deceived," answered Lafayette. "The most sacred promises were made to me; all my requests and propositions were yielded to. I succeeded in pacifying the crowd, and I really believed and hoped that they would continue quiet; that—"

"Sir," interrupted the queen, impatiently, "Whom do you mean by 'they?' Of whom are you speaking in such tones of respect?"

"Madame, I am speaking of the people, with whom I came to an understanding, and who promised me to keep the peace, and to respect the slumbers of your majesty."

"You are not speaking of the people, but of the rebels, the agitators," cried Marie Antoinette, with flashing eyes. "You speak of high traitors, who break violently into the palace of the king; of murderers, who have destroyed two of our faithful subjects. Sir, it is of such crime that you speak with respect; it is with such a rabble that you have dealt, instead of ordering your soldiers to cut them down."

"Madame," said Lafayette, turning pale, "had I attempted to do that, your majesty would not have found refuge in this chamber. For the anger of the mob is like the lightning and thunder of the tempest, it heeds neither door nor bolt, and if it has once broken loose, nothing can restrain or stop it."

"Oh," cried the queen, with a mocking laugh, "it is plain that Mr. Lafayette has been pursuing his studies in America, at the university of revolutions. He speaks of the people with a deference as if it were another majesty to bow to."

"And in that Lafayette is right," said the king, rising and approaching them. "Hear the yell, madame! it sounds like the roaring of lions, and you know, Marie, that the lion is called the king of beasts. Tell us, general, what does the lion want, and what does his roaring mean?"

"Sire, the enemies of the royal family, the agitators and rebels, who have within these last hours come from Paris, have urged on the people afresh, and kindled them with senseless calumnies. They have persuaded the people that your majesty has summoned hither the regiments from all the neighboring stations; that you are collecting an army to put yourself at its head and march against Paris."

Louis cast a significant look at his wife, which was answered with a proud toss of her head.

"I have sought in vain," continued Lafayette, "to make the poor, misguided men conscious of the impossibility of such a plan."

"Yet, sir," broke in Marie Antoinette, fiercely, "the execution of this plan would save the crown from dishonor and humiliation!"

"Only, madame, that it is exactly the execution of it which is impossible," answered Lafayette, gently bowing. "If you could give wings to the soldiers of the various garrisons away from here, the plan might be good, and the army might save the country! But as, unfortunately, this cannot be, we must think of other means of help, for your majesty hears the danger knocking now at the door, and we must do with pacificatory measures what we cannot do with force."

"How will you use pacificatory measures, sir?" asked Marie Antoinette, angrily.

Lafayette cast upon her a sad, pained look, and turned to the king. "Sire," said he, with loud, solemn voice, "sire, the people are frightfully carried away. Stimulating speeches have driven them to despair and to madness. It is only with difficulty that we have succeeded in keeping the mob out of the palace, and closing the door again. 'Paris shall be laid in ashes!' is the horrible cry which drives all these hearts to rage, and to which they give unconditional belief!"

"I will show myself to the people," said Louis. "I will tell them that they have been deceived. I will give them my royal word that I have no hostile designs whatever against Paris."

General Lafayette sighed, and dropped his head heavily upon his breast.

"Do you counsel me not to do this?" asked the king, timidly.

"Sire," answered the general, with a shrug, "the people are now in such an excited, unreasonable state, that words will no longer be sufficient to satisfy them. Your majesty might assure them ever so solemnly that you entertain no hostile intentions whatever against Paris, and that you will not call outside help to your assistance, and the exasperated people would mistrust your assurances! For in all their rage the people have a distinct consciousness of the crimes they are engaged in committing in creating this rebellion against the crown, and they know that it were not human, that it were divine, for your majesty to forgive such crimes, and therefore they would not credit such forgiveness."

"How well General Lafayette knows how to interpret the thoughts of this fanatical rabble, whom he calls 'the people!'" ejaculated the queen, with a scornful laugh.

At this instant a loud, thundering cry was heard below, and thousands upon thousands of voices shouted, "The king! We want to see the king!"

Louis's face lighted up. With quick step he hurried to the window and raised it. The people did not see him at once, but the king saw. He saw the immense square in front of the palace, which had been devoted to the rich equipages of the nobility, occupied by the humbler classes—the troops of his staff marching up in their gala uniforms—he saw it filled with a dense mass of men whom Lafayette had called "the people," whom the queen had termed a "riotous rabble," surging up and down, head pressed to head, here and there faces distorted with rage, eyes blazing, fists clinched, arms bare, and pikes glistening in the morning light, while a great roar, like that which comes from the sea in a tempest, filled the air.

"You are right, Lafayette," said the king, who looked calmly at this black sea of human life—"you are right, this is the people; there are here probably twenty thousand men, and Heaven defend me from regarding all as criminals and rabble! I believe—"

A tremendous shout now filled the air. The king had been seen, some one had noticed him at the open window, and now all heads and all looks were directed to this window, and twenty thousand voices cried, "Long live the king! Long live the king!"

Louis turned with a proud, happy look to the gentlemen and ministers who stood near him, Marie Antoinette having withdrawn to the farthest corner of the room, where, throwing her arms around both of the children, and drawing them to her bosom, she had sunk into a chair.

"What do you say now, gentlemen?" asked the king. "Did they not want to make me believe that my good people hate their king, and wish him ill? But when I show myself to them, hear how they shout to greet me!"

"To Paris!" was now the roar of the mob below. "We want the king should go to Paris!"

"What do they say? What do they want?" asked Louis, turning to Lafayette, who now stood close beside him.

"Sire, they are shouting their wishes to you, that you and the royal family should go to Paris."

"And you, general, what do you say?" asked the king.

"Sire, I have taken the liberty already to say that words and promises are of no more avail to quiet this raving, maddened people, and to make them believe that you have no hostile designs against Paris."

"But if I go to Paris and reside there for a time, it is your opinion, as I understand it, that the people would be convinced that I have no evil intentions against the city—that I should not undertake to destroy the city in which I might live. That is your meaning, is it not?"

"Yes, sire, that is what I wanted to say."

"To Paris, to Paris!" thundered up from below. "The king shall go to Paris!"

Louis withdrew from the window and joined the circle of his ministers, who, with their pale faces, surrounded him.

"Gentlemen," said the king, "you are my counsellors. Well, give me your counsel. Tell me now what I shall do to restore peace and quiet."

But no one replied. Perplexed and confused they looked down to the ground, and only Necker found courage to answer the king after a long pause.

"Sire," he said, "it is a question that might be considered for days which your majesty has submitted to us, and on its answer depends, perhaps, the whole fate of the monarchy. But, as you wish to know the opinions of your ministers, I will venture to give mine: that it would be the safest and most expedient course for your majesty to comply with the wishes of the people, and go to Paris!"

"I supposed so," whispered the king, dropping his head.

"To Paris!" cried the queen, raising her head. "It is impossible. You cannot be in earnest in being willing to go of your own accord down into the abyss of revolution, in order to be destroyed there! To Paris!"

"To Paris!" was the thundering cry from below, as if the words of the queen had awakened a fearful, thousand-voiced echo. "To Paris! The king and the queen shall go to Paris!"

"And never come from there!" cried the queen, with bursting tears.

"Speak, Lafayette!" cried the king. "What do you think?"

"Sire, I think that there is only one way to restore peace and to quiet the people, and that is, for your majesty to go to-day with the royal family to Paris."

"It is my view, too," said Louis, calmly. "Then go, Lafayette, tell the people that the king and queen, together with the dauphin and the princess, will journey to-day to Paris."

The simple and easily spoken words had two very different effects in the cabinet on those who heard them. Some faces lightened up with joy, some grew pale with alarm; there were sighs of despair, and cries of fresh hope. Every one felt that this was a crisis in the fate of the royal family—some thinking that it would bring disaster, others deliverance.

The queen alone put on now a grave, decided look; a lofty pride lighted up her high brow, and with an almost joyful expression she looked at her husband, who had been induced to do something—at least, to take a decisive step.

"The king has spoken," she said, amid the profoundest silence, "and it becomes us to obey the will of the king, and to be subject to it. Madame de Campan, make all the preparations for my departure, and do it in view of a long stay in Paris!"

"Now, Lafayette," asked the king, as the general still delayed in the room, "why do you not hasten to announce my will to the people?"

"Sire," answered Lafayette, solemnly, "there are moments when a people can only be pacified by the voice either of God or of its king, and where every other human voice is overwhelmed by the thunder of the storm!"

"And you think that this is such a moment?" asked the king. "You think that I ought myself to announce to the people what I mean to do?"

Lafayette bowed and pointed to the window, which shook even then with the threatening cry, "The king! We will see the king! He shall go to Paris! The king, the king!"

Louis listened awhile in thoughtful silence to this thundering shout, which was at once so full of majesty and horror; then he quickly raised his head.

"I will follow your advice, general," said he, calmly. "I will announce my decision to the people. Give me your hand, madame, we will go into the balcony-room. And you, gentlemen, follow me!"

The queen took the hand of her husband without a word, and gave the other to the little dauphin, who timidly clung to her, while her daughter Therese quietly and composedly walked near them.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XIV.

TO PARIS.

WITHOUT speaking a word, and with hasty steps, the royal couple, followed by the ministers and courtiers, traversed the two adjoining apartments, and entered the balcony-room, which, situated at the centre of the main building, commanded a wide view of the inner court and the square in front of it.

The valet Hue hastened, at a motion from the king, to throw open the great folding doors, and the king, parting with a smile from Marie Antoinette, stepped out upon the balcony. In an instant, as if the arm of God had been extended and laid upon this raging sea, the roaring ceased; then, as soon as the king was recognized, a multitudinous shout went up, increasing every moment, and sending its waves beyond the square, out into the adjoining streets.

"The king! Long live the king!"

Louis, pale with emotion and with tears in his eyes, went forward to the very edge of the balcony, and, as a sign that he was going to speak, raised both hands. The motion was understood, and the loud cries were hushed which now and then burst from the mighty mass of people. Then above the heads of the thousands there who gazed breathlessly up, sounded the loud, powerful voice of the king.

"I will give my dear people the proof that my fatherly heart is distrusted without reason. I will journey to-day with the queen and my children to Paris, and there take up my residence. Return thither, my children, I shall follow you in a few hours and come to Paris!"

Then, while the people were breaking out into a cry of joy, and were throwing arms, caps, and clothes up into the air, Louis stepped back from the balcony into the hall.

Instantly there arose a new cry below. "The queen shall show herself! We want to see the queen! The queen! the queen! the queen!"

And in tones louder, and more commanding, and more terrible every moment, the summons came in through the balcony door.

The queen took her two children by the hand and advanced a step or two, but the king held her back.

"Do not go, Marie," he cried, with trembling voice and anxious look. "No, do not go. It is such a fearful sight, this raging mass at one's feet, it confuses one's senses. Do not go, Marie!"

But the cry below had now expanded into the volume of a hurricane, and made the very walls of the palace shake.

"You hear plainly, sire," cried Marie Antoinette; "there is just as much danger whether we see or do not see it. Let me do, therefore, what you have done! Come, children!"

And walking between the two little ones, the queen stepped out upon the balcony with a firm step and raised head, followed by the king, who placed himself behind Marie Antoinette, as if he were a sentinel charged with the duty of protecting her life.

But the appearance of the whole royal family did not produce the effect which Louis had, perhaps, anticipated. The crowd did not now break out into shouts of joy. They cried and roared and howled: "The queen alone! No children! We want no one but the queen! Away with the children!"

It was all in vain that Louis advanced to the edge of the platform; in vain that he raised his arms as if commanding silence. The sound of his voice was lost in the roar of the mob, who, with their clinched fists, their pikes and other weapons, their horrid cry, so frightened the dauphin that he could not restrain his tears.

The royal family drew back and entered the apartment again, where they were received by the pale, trembling, speechless, weeping courtiers and servants.

But the mob below were not pacified. They appeared as though they were determined to give laws to the king and queen, and demand obedience from them.

"The queen! we will see the queen!" was the cry again and again. "The queen shall show herself!"

"Well, be it so!" cried Marie Antoinette, with cool decision, and, pressing through the courtiers, who wanted to restrain her, and even impatiently thrusting back the king, who implored her not to go, she stepped out upon the balcony. Alone, without any one to accompany her, and having only the protection which the lion-tamer has when he enters the cage of the fierce monsters—the look of the eye and the commanding mien!

And the lion appeared to be subdued; his fearful roar suddenly ceased, and in astonishment all these thousands gazed up at the queen, the daughter of the Cæsars, standing above in proud composure, her arms folded upon her breast, and looking down with steady eye into the yawning and raging abyss.

The people, overcome by this royal composure, broke into loud shouts of applause, and, during the continuance of these thousand-voiced bravos, the queen, with a proud smile upon her lips, stepped back from the balcony into the chamber.

The dauphin flew to her with open arms and climbed up her knee. "Mamma queen, my dear mamma queen," cried he, "stay with me, don't go out again to these dreadful men, I am afraid of them—oh, I am afraid!"

Marie Antoinette took the little boy in her arms, and with her cold, pale lips pressed a kiss upon his forehead. For one instant it seemed as if she felt herself overcome by the fearful scene through which she had just passed—as if the tears which were confined in her heart would force themselves into her eyes. But Marie Antoinette overcame this weakness of the woman, for she felt that at this hour she could only be a queen.

With the dauphin in her arms, and pressing him closely to her heart, she advanced to the king, who, in order not to let his wife see the tears which flooded his face, had withdrawn to the adjoining apartment and was leaning against the door.

"Sire," said Marie Antoinette, entering the room, and presenting the dauphin to him, "sire, I conjure you that, in this fearful hour, you will make one promise to me."

"What is it, Marie?" asked the king, "what do you desire?"

"Sire, by all that is dear to you and me," continued the queen, "by the welfare and safety of France, by your own and by the safety of this dear child, your successor, I conjure you to promise me that, if we ever must witness such a scene of horror again, and if you have the means to escape it, you will not let the opportunity pass." *

The king, deeply moved by the noble and glowing face of the queen, by the tones of her voice, and by her whole expression, turned away. He wanted to speak, but could not; tears choked his utterance; and, as if he were ashamed of his weakness, he pushed the queen and the dauphin back from him, hastened through the room, and disappeared through the door on the opposite side.

Marie Antoinette looked with a long, sad face after him, and then returned to the balcony-room. A shudder passed through her soul, and a dark, dreadful presentiment made her heart for an instant stop beating. She remembered that this chamber in which she had that day suffered such immeasurable pain—that this chamber, which now echoed the cries of a mob that had this day for the first time prescribed laws to a queen, had been the dying-chamber of Louis XIV.† A dreadful presentiment told her that this day the room had become the dying-chamber of royalty. Like a pale, bloody corpse, the Future passed before her eyes, and, with that lightning speed which accompanies moments of the greatest excitement, all the old dark warnings came back to her which she had previously encountered. She thought of the picture of the slaughter of the babes at Bethlehem, which decorated the walls of the room in which the dauphin passed his first night on French soil; then of that dreadful prophecy which Count de Cagliostro had made to her on her journey to Paris, and of the scaffold which he showed her. She thought of the hurricane which had made the earth shake and turn up trees by their

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* The very words of the queen.—See Beauchesne, "Louis XVI., sa Vie," etc., p 145.

† Historical.—See Goncourt, "Marie Antoinette," p. 195.

roots, on the first night which the dauphin had passed in Versailles. She thought too of the dreadful misfortune which on the next day happened to hundreds of men at the fireworks in Paris, and cost them their lives. She recalled the moment at the coronation when the king caught up the crown which the papal nuncio was just on the point of placing on his head, and said at the same time, "It pricks me."* And now it seemed to her to be a new, dreadful reason for alarm, that the scene of horror, which she had just passed through, should take place in the dying-chamber of that king to whom France owed her glory and her greatness.

"We are lost, lost!" she whispered to herself. "Nothing can save us. There is the scaffold!"

With a silent gesture, and a gentle inclination of her head, the queen took her leave of all present, and returned to her own apartments, which were now guarded by Lafayette's soldiers, and which now conveyed no hint of the scene of horror which had transpired there a few hours before.

Some hours later two cannon were discharged upon the great square before the palace. They announced to the city of Versailles that the king, the queen, and their children, had just left the proud palace—were then leaving the solitary residence at Versailles—never to return!

From the lofty tower of the church of St. Louis, in which recently the opening of the States-General had been celebrated, the bell was just then striking the first hour after mid-day, when the carriage drove out of the great gate through which the royal family must pass on its way to Paris. A row of other carriages formed the escort of the royal equipage. They were intended for the members of the States-General. For as soon as the journey of the king to Paris was announced, the National Assembly decreed that it regarded itself as inseparably connected with the person of the king, and that it would follow him to Paris. A deputation had instantly repaired to the palace, to communicate this decree to the king, and had been received by Louis with cordial expressions of thanks.

Marie Antoinette, however, had received the tidings of these resolves of the National Assembly with a suspicious smile, and an angry flash darted into her eyes.

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* Historical.

"And so, the gentlemen of the Third Estate have gained their point!" cried she, in wrath. "They alone have produced this revolt, in order that the National Assembly may have a pretext for going to Paris. Now, they have reached their goal! Yet do not tell me that the revolution is ended here. On the contrary, the hydra will now put forth all its heads, and will tear us in pieces. But, very well! I would rather be torn to pieces by them than bend before them!"

And, with a lofty air and calm bearing, Marie Antoinette entered the great coach in which the royal family was to make the journey to Paris. Near her sat the king, between them the dauphin. Opposite to them, on the broad, front seat, were their daughter Therese, the Princess Elizabeth, and Madame de Tourzel, governess of the royal children.

Behind them, in a procession, whose end could not be seen, followed an artillery train; then the mob, armed with pikes, and other weapons—men covered with blood and dust, women with dishevelled hair and torn garments, the most of them drunken with wine, exhausted by watching during the night, shouting and yelling, and singing low songs, or mocking the royal family with scornful words. Behind these wild masses came two hundred *gardes du corps* without weapons, hats, and shoulder-straps, every one escorted by two grenadiers, and they were followed by some soldiers of the Swiss guard and the Flanders regiment. In the midst of this train rattled loaded cannon, each one accompanied by two soldiers. But still more fearful than the retinue of the royal equipage were the heralds who preceded it—heralds consisting of the most daring and defiant of these men and women, impatiently longing for the moment when they could announce to the city of Paris that the revolution in Versailles had humiliated the king, and given the people victory. They carried with them the bloody tokens of this victory, the heads of Varicourt and Deshuttes, the faithful Swiss guards, who had died in the service of their king. They had hoisted both these heads upon pikes, which two men of the mob carried before the procession. Between them strode, with proud, triumphant mien, a gigantic figure, with long, black beard, with naked blood-flecked arms, with flashing eyes, his face and hands wet with the blood with which he had imbued himself, and in his right hand a slaughter-knife which still dripped blood. This was Jourdan, who, from his cutting off the heads of both the Swiss guards, had won the name of the executioner—a name which he understood how to keep during the whole revolution.*

Like storm-birds, desirous to be the first to announce to Paris the triumph of the populace, and impatient of the slow progress of the royal train, these heralds of victory, bearing their bloody banner, hastened on in advance of the procession to Paris. In Sèvres they made a halt—not to rest, or wait for the oncoming train—but to have the hair of the two heads dressed by *friseurs*, in order, as Jourdan announced with fiendish laughter to the yelling mob, that they might make their entrance into the city as fine gentlemen.

While before them and behind them these awful cries, loud singing and laughing resounded, within the carriage that conveyed the royal family there was unbroken silence. The king sat leaning back in the corner, with his eyes closed, in order not to see the horrid forms which from time to time approached the window of the carriage, to stare in with curious looks, or with mocking laughter and equivoques, to heap misery on the unfortunate family.

The queen, however, sat erect, with proud, dignified bearing, courageously looking the horrors of the day in the face, and not a quiver of the eyelids, nor a sigh, betraying the pain that tortured her soul.

"No, better die than grant to this triumphing rabble the pleasure of seeing what I suffer! Better sink with exhaustion than complain."

Not a murmur, not a sigh, came from her lips; and yet, when the dauphin, after four hours of this sad journey, turned with a supplicatory expression to his mother, and said to her with his sweet voice, "Mamma queen, I am hungry," the proud expression withdrew from the features of the queen, and two great tears slowly ran down over her cheeks.

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* Jourdan, the executioner, had, until that time, been a model in the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture.

At last, after a ride of eight hours, the frightful train reached Paris. Not a window in all the streets through which the royal procession went was empty. In amazement and terror the people of the middle class gazed at this hitherto unseen spectacle—the King and the Queen of France brought in triumph to the capital by the lowest people in the city! A dumb fear took possession of those who hitherto had tried to ignore the revolution, and supposed that every thing would subside again into the old, wonted forms. Now, no one could entertain this hope longer; now, the most timid must confess that a revolution had indeed come, and that people must accustom themselves to look at it eye to eye.

Slowly the train moved forward—slowly down the quay which extends along by the garden of the Tuileries. The loungers who were in the garden hurried to the fence, which then bordered the park on the side of the quay, in order to watch this frightful procession from this point: to see an unbridled populace dash in pieces the prescriptive royalty of ages.

Scorn and the love of destruction were written on most of the faces of these observers, but many were pale, and many quivered with anger and grief. In the front ranks of the spectators stood two young men, one of them in simple civilian's costume, the other in the uniform of a sub-lieutenant. The face of the young officer was pale, but it lightened up with rare energy; and with his noble, antique profile, and flaming eyes, it enchanted every look, and fixed the attention of every one who observed him.

As the howling, roaring mob passed him, the young officer turned to his companion with an expression of fiery indignation. "O God," he cried, "how is this possible? Has the king no cannon to destroy this *canaille?*"*

"My friend," answered the young man, smiling, "remember the words of our great poet Corneille: 'The people give the king his purple and take it back when they please. The beggar, king only by the people's grace, simply gives back his purple to the people.'"

"Ah!" cried the young lieutenant, smiling, "what once has been received should be firmly held. I, at least, if I had once received the purple by the people's grace, would not give it back. But come, let us go on, it angers me to see this *canaille*, upon which you bestow the fine name of 'the people.'" He hastily grasped the arm of his friend, and turned to a more solitary part of the garden of the Tuileries.

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* His own words.—See Beauchesne, vol. i., p. 35.

This young sub-lieutenant, who saw with such indignation this revolutionary procession pass him, and whom destiny had appointed one day to bring this revolution to an end—this young lieutenant's name was *Napoleon Bonaparte.*

The young man who walked at his side, and whom, too, destiny had appointed to work a revolution, although only in the theatrical world, to recreate the drama—this young man's name was Talma.

CHAPTER XV.

MAMMA QUEEN.

"EVERY thing passes over, every thing has an end; one must only have courage and think of that," said Marie Antoinette, with a gentle smile, as on the morning after her arrival in Paris, she had risen from her bed and drunk her chocolate in the improvised sitting-room. "Here we are installed in the Tuileries, and have slept, while we yesterday were thinking we were lost, and that only death could give us rest and peace again."

"It was a fearful day," said Madame de Campan, with a sigh, "but your majesty went through it like a heroine."

"Ah, Campan," said the queen, sadly, "I have not the ambition to want to be a heroine, and I should be very thankful if it were allowed me from this time on to be a wife and mother, if it is no longer allowed me to be a queen."

At this instant the door opened; the little dauphin, followed by his teacher, the Abbé Davout, ran in and flew with extended arms to Marie Antoinette.

"Oh, mamma queen!" cried he, with winning voice, "let us go back again to our beautiful palace; it is dreadful here in this great, dark house."

"Hush, my child, hush!" said the queen, pressing the boy close to her. "You must not say so; you must accustom yourself to be contented everywhere."

"Mamma queen," whispered the child, tenderly nestling close to his mother, "it is true it is dreadful here, but I will always say it so low that nobody except you can hear. But tell me, who owns this hateful house? And why do we want to stay here, when we have such a fine palace and a beautiful garden in Versailles?"

"My son," answered the queen with a sigh, "this house belongs to us, and it is a beautiful and famous palace. You ought not to say that it does not please you, for your renowned great-grandfather, the great Louis XIV., lived here, and made this palace celebrated all over Europe."

"Yet I wish that we were away from here," whispered the dauphin, casting his large blue eyes with a prolonged and timid glance through the wide, desolate room, which was decorated sparingly with old-fashioned, faded furniture.

"I wish so, too," sighed Marie Antoinette, to herself; but softly as she had spoken the words, the sensitive ear of the child had caught them.

"You, too, want to go?" asked Louis Charles, in amazement. "Are you not queen now, and can you not do what you want to?"

The queen, pierced to the very heart by the innocent question of the child, burst into tears.

"My prince," said the Abbé Davout, turning to the dauphin, "you see that you trouble the queen, and her majesty needs rest. Come, we will take a walk."

But Marie Antoinette put both her arms around the child and pressed its head with its light locks to her breast.

"No," she said, "no, he does not trouble me. Let me weep. Tears do me good. One is only unfortunate when she can no longer weep; when—but what is that?" she eagerly asked, rising from her easy-chair. "What does that noise mean?"

And in very fact in the street there were loud shouting and crying, and intermingled curses and threats.

"Mamma," cried the dauphin, nestling close up to the queen, "is to-day going to be just like yesterday?" *

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* The very words of the dauphin.—See Beauchesne, vol. i.

The door was hastily opened, and the king entered.

"Sire," asked Marie, eagerly advancing toward him, "are they going to renew the dreadful scenes of yesterday?"

"On the contrary, Marie, they are going to bring to their reckoning those who occasioned the scenes of yesterday," answered the king. "A deputation from the Court of Chatelet have come to the Tuileries, and desire of me an authorization to bring to trial those who are guilty, and of you any information which you can give about what has taken place. The mob have accompanied the deputation hither, and hence arise these cries. I am come to ask you, Marie, to receive the deputation of Chatelet."

"As if there were any choice left us to refuse to see them," answered Marie Antoinette, sighing. "The populace who are howling and crying without are now the master of the men who come to us with a sneer, and ask us whether we will grant them an audience. We must submit!"

The king did not answer, but shrugged his shoulders, and opened the door of the antechamber. "Let them enter," he said to the chamberlains there.

The two folding doors were now thrown open, and the loud voice of an officer announced, "The honorable judges of Chatelet!"

Slowly, with respectful mien and bowed head, the gentlemen, arrayed in their long black robes, entered the room, and remained humbly standing near the door.

Marie Antoinette had advanced a few steps. Not a trace of grief and disquiet was longer to be seen in her face. Her figure was erect, her glance was proud and full of fire, and the expression of her countenance noble and majestic. She was still the queen, though not surrounded by the solemn pomp which attended the public audiences at Versailles. She did not stand on the purple-carpeted step of the throne, no gold-embroidered canopy arched over her, no crowd of brilliant courtiers surrounded her, only her husband stood near her; her son clung to her side, and his teacher, the Abbé Davout, timidly withdrew into the background. These formed all her suite. But Marie Antoinette did not need external pomp to be a queen; she was so in her bearing, in every look, in every gesture. With commanding dignity she allowed the deputation to approach her, and to speak with her. She listened with calm attention to the words of the speaker, who, in the name of the court, gave utterance to the deep horror with which the treasonable actions of the day before had filled him. He then humbly begged the queen to give such names of the rioters as might be known to her, that they might be arrested, but Marie Antoinette interrupted him in his address.

"No, sir," she cried, "no, never will I be an informer against the subjects of the king." *

The speaker bowed respectfully. "Then let me at least beg of you, in the name of the High-Court of the Chatelet, to give us your order to bring the guilty parties to trial, for without such a charge we cannot prosecute the criminals who have been engaged in these acts."

"Nor do I wish you to bring any one to trial," cried the queen, with dignity. "I have seen all, known all, and forgotten all! Go, gentlemen, go! My heart knows no vengeance; it has forgiven all those who have wounded me. Go!" †

With a commanding gesture of her hand, and a gentle nod of her head, she dismissed the deputation, who silently withdrew.

"Marie," said the king, grasping the hand of his wife with unwonted eagerness, and pressing it tenderly to his lips, "Marie, I thank you in the name of all my subjects. You have acted this hour not only as a queen, but as the mother of my people."

"Ah, sir," replied the queen, with a sad smile, "only that the children will not believe in the love of their mother—only that your subjects do not consider me their mother, but their enemy."

"They have been misguided," said the king. "Evil-minded men have deceived them, but I hope we shall succeed in bringing the people back from their error."

"Sire," sighed Marie Antoinette, "I hope for nothing more; but," added she, with still firmer voice, "I also fear nothing more. The worst may break over me—it shall find me armed!"

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* Marie Antoinette's own words.—See Goncourt, "Marie Antoinette," pp. 196, 197.

† Ibid.

The side-door now opened, and Madame de Campan entered.

"Your majesty," said she, bowing low, "a great number of ladies from the Faubourg St. Germain are in the small reception-room. They wish to testify their devotion to your majesty."

"I will receive them at once," cried Marie Antoinette, with an almost joyful tone. "Ah, only see, husband, the consolations which misfortune brings. These ladies of the Faubourg St. Germain formerly cut me; they could not forget that I was an Austrian. To-day they feel that I am the Queen of France, and that I belong to them. Pardon me, sire, for leaving you."

She hastened away with a rapid step. The king looked after her with an expression of pain. "Poor queen," he whispered to himself, "how much she is misjudged, how wrongly she is calumniated! And I cannot change it, and must let it be."

He sank with a deep sigh, which seemed much like a groan, into an arm-chair, and was lost in painful recollections. A gentle touch on his hand, which rested on the side-arm of the chair, restored him to consciousness. Before him stood the dauphin, and looked gravely and thoughtfully out of his large blue eyes up into his father's face.

"Ah, is it you, my little Louis Charles?" said the king, nodding to him. "What do you want of me, my child?"

"Papa king," answered the boy, timidly, "I should like to ask you something—something really serious!"

"Something really serious!" replied the king. "Well, what is it? Let me hear!"

"Sire," replied the dauphin, with a weighty and thoughtful air, "sire, Madame de Tourzel has always told me that I must love the people of France very much, and treat every one very friendly, because the people of France love my papa and my mamma so much, and I ought to be very grateful for it. How comes it then, sire, that the French people are now so bad to you, and that they do not love mamma any longer? What have you both done to make the people so angry, because I have been told that the people are subject to your majesty, and that they owe you obedience and respect? But they were not obedient yesterday, and not at all respectful, your subjects, were they? How is this, papa?"

The king drew the little prince to his knee, and put his arm around the slight form of the boy. "I will explain it to you, my son," he said, "and listen carefully to what I say to you."

"I will, sire," answered the boy eagerly. "I at least am an obedient subject of my king, for the Abbé Davout has told me that I am nothing but a subject of your majesty, and that, as a son and a subject, I must give a good example to the French people, how to love and obey the king. And I love you very much, papa, and I am just as obedient as I can be. But it seems as though my good example had made no difference with the other subjects. How comes that about, papa king?"

"My son," answered Louis, "that comes because there are bad men who have told the people that I do not love them. We have had to have great wars, and wars cost a deal of money. And so I asked money of my people—just as my ancestors always did."

"But, papa," cried the dauphin, "why did you do that? Why did you not take my purse, and pay out of that? You know that I receive every day my purse all filled with new francs, and—but then," he interrupted himself, "there would be nothing left for the poor children, to whom I always give money on my walks. And, oh! there are so many poor children, so very many, that my purse is empty every day, when I return from my walk, and yet I give to each child only one poor franc-piece. So your people have money, more money than you yourself?"

"My child, kings receive all that they have from their people, but they give it all back to the people again; the king is the one appointed by God to govern his people, and the people owe respect and obedience to the king, and have to pay taxes to him. And so, if he needs money, he is justified in asking his subjects for it, and so does what is called 'laying taxes' upon them. Do you understand me?"

"Oh! yes, papa," cried the child, who had listened with open eyes and breathless attention, "I understand all very well. But I don't like it. It seems to me that if a man is king, every thing belongs to him, and that the king ought to have all the money so as to give it to the people. They ought to ask *him*, and not he *them!*"

"In former and more happy times it was so," said the king, with a sigh. "But many kings have misused their power and authority, and now the king cannot pay out money unless the people understand all about it and consent!"

"Have you given out money, papa, without asking the people's leave? Was that the reason they came to Versailles yesterday, and were so wicked, ah! so very wicked? For those bad men—they were the people, were they not?"

"No, my son," answered Louis, "I hope they were not the people. The people cannot come to me in such great masses; they must have their representatives. The representatives of the people I have myself called to me; they are the States-General, which I assembled at Versailles. I asked of them money for the outlays which I had to make for the people, but they asked things of me that I could not grant, either for my own sake, or for yours, my son, who are some day to be my successor. Then wicked men came and stirred up the people, and told them that I did not love the people any more, and that I wanted to trouble my subjects. And the poor people have believed what these evil advisers and slanderers have told them, and have been led astray into making the riot against me. But every thing will come out right again, and my subjects will see that I love them, and am ready to share every thing with them. That is the reason I have come to Paris, to live here among my people. It is certainly not so pleasant as in Versailles; our rooms are not so fine and convenient, and we do not have the beautiful gardens here that we had there. But we must learn to be contented here, and put up with what we have. We must remember that there is no one in Paris better than we, and that the Parisians must acknowledge that the king loves them, for he has given up his beautiful Versailles, in order to live with them, and share all their need, and all the disagreeable things which they have to bear."

"Papa king, I have understood every thing, and I am very much ashamed that I have complained before. I promise you, sire," he continued, with earnest mien, and laying his hand upon his breast, "yes, sire, I promise you, that I will take pains to give the people a good example, and to be really good and kind. I will never complain again that we are living in Paris, and I will take pains to be happy and contented here."

And the dauphin kept his word. He took pains to be contented; he said not another word about the old pleasant life at Versailles, but appeared to have forgotten all about ever having been anywhere but in this great, desolate palace, with its halls filled with faded tapestry; stately, solemn furniture, their golden adornments having grown dim, and their upholstery hard; he seemed never to have known any garden but this, only one little corner of which was set apart for the royal family, and through the iron gate of which threatening words were often heard, and spiteful faces seen.

One day, when the dauphin heard such words, and saw such faces beyond the paling, he shrank back, and ran to his mother, earnestly imploring her with trembling voice to leave the garden, and go into the palace. But Marie Antoinette led him farther into the garden, instead of complying with his wish. In the little pavilion which stood at the corner of the enclosure on the side of the quay, she sat down, and lifting her boy up in her arms, set him before her on the marble table, wiped away his tears with her handkerchief, and tenderly implored him not to weep or feel badly any more.

"If you weep, my child," she said, sadly, as the dauphin could not control his tears, "if you weep, I shall have no courage left, and it will be as dark and dreary to me as if the sun had gone down. If you weep, I should want to weep with you; and you see, my son, that it would not be becoming for a queen to weep. The wicked people, who want to hurt our feelings, they find pleasure in it, and therefore we must be altogether too proud to let them see what we suffer. I have this pride, but when I see you suffer it takes away all my strength. You remember our ride from Versailles here, my son? How the bad men who surrounded us, mocked at me and said foul things to me! I was cold and calm, but I could not help weeping, my child, when you complained of being hungry."

"Mamma," cried the child, with flashing eyes, "I will never complain again, and the bad men shall never have the pleasure of seeing me weep."

"But good men, my child, you must always treat kindly, and behave very prettily to them."

"I will do so," answered the dauphin, thoughtfully. "But, mamma queen, tell me who the good men are!"

"You must believe, Louis, that all men are good, and therefore you must be kind to all. If then they despise your goodness or friendliness, and cast it from them, it will not be your fault, and our heavenly Father and your parents will be pleased with you."

"But, mamma," cried the prince, and a shadow passed over his pure, beautiful child's face, "but, mamma, I cannot see that all men are good. When they were abusing us, and cursing us, and speaking bad words at us in the carriage, and were talking so angrily at you, dear mamma, the men were not good, and I never could treat them friendly if they should come again."

"They will not come again, Louis. No, we will hope that the bad men will not come again, and that those who come to see us here are good men; so be very kind and polite to everybody, that all may love you, and see that their future king is good and polite, even while a child."

"Good?" cried the boy, spiritedly. "I will be good and polite to everybody, that you may be satisfied with me. Yes, just for that will I be so."

Marie Antoinette pressed the pretty boy to herself, and kissed his lips. Just then an officer entered and announced General Lafayette and Bailly, the mayor of Paris.

"Mamma," whispered the prince, as the two gentlemen entered—"mamma, that is the general that was at Versailles, then. I can never be kind to him, for he belongs to the bad men."

"Hush! my child—hush!" whispered the queen. "For God's sake, do not let anybody hear that. No, no, General Lafayette does not belong to our enemies, he means well toward us. Treat him kindly, very kindly, my child."

And Marie Antoinette took her son by the hand, and, with a smile upon her lips, went to meet the two gentlemen, in order to inquire the reason for their appearing at this unwonted time and place.

"Madame," said General Lafayette, "I have come to ask your majesty whether you will not have the goodness to let me know the hours in which you may wish to visit the park and the garden, that I may make my arrangements accordingly."

"That means, general," cried the queen, "that it is not to depend upon my free-will when and at what times I am to walk in the park, but it will be allowed me only at certain hours, just as prisoners are allowed to take their walks at certain hours."

"I beg your pardon, madame," said the general, with great respect; "your majesty will graciously believe, that to me, the peace and security of your exalted person is sacred above every thing, and that I regard it as my first duty to protect you against every insult, and every thing that may be disagreeable."

"And so it has come to that," cried Marie Antoinette, angrily. "The Queen of France must be protected against insults and disagreeable things. She is not to go out when she will into her park, because she has to fear that, if General Lafayette has not previously made his special preparations, the people will insult her. But if this is so, sir, why do you not close the gates of the park? It is royal property, and it probably will be allowed to the king to defend his private property from the brutality of the rabble. I will myself, general, see to it that I be protected from insults, and that, at any time when it pleases me, I may go into the park and the inner gardens. I will ask his majesty the king to allow the gates of the park and the promenade on the quay to be closed. That will close every thing, and we shall at least gain the freedom thereby of being able to take walks at any time, without first sending information to General Lafayette."

"Madame, I expected that you would answer me so," said Lafayette, sadly, "and I have therefore brought M. de Bailly with me, that he might join me in supplicating your majesty to graciously abstain from taking measures of violence, and not to further stir up the feelings of the people, already so exasperated."

"And so you are of this opinion, sir?" asked Marie Antoinette, turning to M. Bailly. "You, too, regard it as a compulsory measure, for the king to claim his own right, and to keep out of his property those who insult him."

"Your majesty, the king is, unfortunately, not free to make use of this right, as you call it."

"You will not say, sir, that if it pleases the king not to allow evil-disposed persons to enter the park of the Tuileries, he has not the right to close the gates?"

"Madame, I must indeed take the privilege of saying so," answered M. de Bailly, with a gentle obeisance. "King Henry IV. gave the Parisians the perpetual privilege of having the park of the Tuileries open to them always, and free to be used in their walks. The palace of the Tuileries was, as your majesty knows, originally built by Queen Catherine de Medicis, after the death of her husband, for the home of her widowhood. All sorts of stories were then current about the uncanny things which were said to occur in the park of the Tuileries. They told about laboratories in which Queen Catherine prepared her poisons; of a pavilion in which there was a martyr's chamber; of subterranean cells for those who had been buried alive; and all these dreadful stories made such an impression that no one dared approach this place of horrors after sunset. But when Queen Catherine had left Paris, and King Henry IV. resided in the Louvre, he had this dreaded Tuileries garden, with all its horrors, opened to the Parisians, and out of the queen's garden he made one for the people, in order that the curse which rested upon it might be changed into a blessing."

"And now you suppose, Mr. Mayor, that it would change the blessing into a curse again, if we should want to close the gates that Henry IV. opened?"

"I do fear it, madame, and therefore venture to ask that the right to enter the Tuileries gardens may not be taken from the people, nor their enjoyment interfered with."

"Not the people's enjoyment, only ours, is to be interfered with," cried Marie Antoinette, bitterly. "They are doubtless right who call the people now the real king of France, but they forget that this new king has usurped the throne only by treachery, rebellion, and murder, and that the wrath of God and the justice of man will one day hurl him down into the dust at our feet. In this day I hope, and until then I will bear in patience and with unshaken courage what fate may lay upon me. The wickedness and brutality of men shall at least not intimidate me, and fear shall not humiliate me to the state of a prisoner who takes her walks under the protection of M. de Lafayette, the general of the people, at appointed hours."

"Your majesty," cried Lafayette, turning pale.

"What is your pleasure?" interrupted the queen, with a proud movement of her head. "You were a gentleman, and knew the customs and mode of our court before you went to America. Has the want of manners there so disturbed your memory that you do not know that it is not permitted to speak in the presence of the queen without being asked or permitted by her to do so?"

"General," cried the dauphin, at this instant, with loud, eager voice, running forward to Lafayette, and extending to him his little hand—"general, I should like to salute you. Mamma told me that I must be kind to all those who are good to us and love us, and just as you were coming in with this gentleman, mamma told me that General Lafayette does not belong to our enemies, but means well to us. Let me, therefore, greet you kindly and give you my hand." And while saying so and smiling kindly at the general, he raised his great blue eyes to the face of his mother an instant with a supplicatory expression.

Lafayette took the extended hand of the prince, and a flush of deep emotion passed over his face that was just before kindling with anger. As if touched with reverence and astonishment, he bent his knee before this child, whose countenance beamed with innocence, love, and goodness, and pressed to his lips the little hand that rested in his own.

"My prince," said he, deeply moved, "you have just spoken to me with the tongue of an angel, and I swear to you, and to your exalted royal mother, that I will never forget this moment; that I will remember it so long as I live. The kiss which I have impressed upon the hand of my future king is at once the seal of the solemn vow, and the oath of unchangeable fidelity and devotion which I consecrate to my king and to the whole royal family, and in which nothing shall make me waver; nothing, not even the anger and the want of favor of my exalted queen. Dauphin of France, you have to-day gained a soldier for your throne who is prepared to shed his last drop of blood for you and your house, and on whose fidelity and devotion you may continually count."

With tears in his eyes, his brave, noble face quivering with emotion, Lafayette looked at the child that with cheeks all aglow and with a pleasant smile was gazing with great, thoughtful child's eyes up to the strong man, who placed himself so humbly and devotedly at his feet. Behind him stood M. de Bailly, with bended head and folded hands, listening with solemn thoughtfulness to the words of the general, upon whose strong shoulders the fate of the monarchy rested, and who, at this time, was the mightiest and most conspicuous man in France, because the National Guard of Paris was still obedient to him, and followed his commands.

Close by the dauphin stood the queen, in her old, proud attitude, but upon her face a striking change had taken place. The expression of anger and suspicion which it had before displayed had not completely disappeared. The cloud which had gathered upon her lofty forehead was dissipated, and her face shone out bright and clear. The large, grayish-blue eyes, which before had shot angry darts, now glowed with mild fire, and around her lips played an instant that fair, pleasant smile which, in her happier days, had often moved the favorites of the queen to verses of praise, and which her enemies had so often made a reproach to her.

When the general ceased there was silence—that eloquent, solemn silence which accompanies those moments in which the Genius of History hovers over the heads of men, and, touching them with its pinions, ties their tongues and opens the eyes of the spirit, so that they can look into the future, and, with presaging horror, read all the secrets of coming time as by a flash of lightning.

Such a critical moment in history was that in which Lafayette, at the feet of the dauphin, swore eternal fidelity to the monarchy of France in the presence of the unfortunate mayor of Paris, who was soon to seal his loyalty with his own blood, and in presence of the queen, whose lofty character was soon to make her a martyr.

The moments passed by, then Marie Antoinette bowed to Lafayette with her gracious smile.

"Rise, general," she said, in gentle tones, "God has heard your oath, and I accept it in the name of the French monarchy, my husband, my son, and myself. I shall always continue mindful of it, and I hope that you will also. And I beg you, too," she continued, in a low voice, and with a deep flush upon her face, "I beg you to forgive me if I have hitherto cast unworthy reproaches upon you. I have lived through so many sad and dreadful days, that it will be set down to my favor if my nerves are agitated and easily excited. I shall probably learn to accept evil days with calmness, and to bow my head patiently beneath the yoke which my enemies are laying upon me! But still I feel the injury, and the proud habits of my birth and life war against it. But only wait, and I shall become accustomed to it."

While saying this she stooped down to the dauphin and kissed his golden hair. A tear fell from her eyes upon the forehead of her son, and glittered there like a star fallen from heaven. Marie Antoinette did not see it, did not know that the tear which she was trying to conceal was now glistening on the brow of her son—on that brow which was never to wear any other diadem than the one that the tears of love placed on his innocent head.

"Heaven defend your majesty ever being compelled to become accustomed to insult!" cried Lafayette, deeply moved. "I hope we have seen our worst days, and that after the tempest there will be sunshine and bright weather again. The people will look back with shame and regret upon the wild and stormy scenes to which they have allowed themselves to be drawn by unprincipled agitators; they will bow in love and obedience before the royal couple who, with so much confidence and devotion, leave their beautiful, retired home at Versailles, in order to comply with the wish of the people and come to Paris. Will your majesty have the goodness to ask the mayor of Paris, and he will tell you, madame, how deeply moved all the good citizens of Paris are at the truly noble spirit which prompted you to refuse to initiate an investigation respecting the night of horrors at Versailles, and to bring the ringleaders to justice."

"Is it true, M. de Bailly?" asked the queen, eagerly. "Was my decision approved? Have I friends still among the people of Paris?"

"Your majesty," answered M. de Bailly, bowing low, "all good citizens of Paris have seen with deep emotion the noble resolve of your majesty, and in all noble and true hearts the royal words are recorded imperishably, which your majesty spoke to the judges of the Chatelet, 'I have heard all, seen all, and forgotten all!' With tears of deep feeling, with a hallowed joy, they are repeated through all Paris; they have become the watchword of all the well-inclined and faithful, the evangel of love and forgiveness for all women, of fidelity and devotion for all men! It has been seen and confessed that the throne of France is the possessor not only of goodness and beauty, but of forgiveness and gentleness, and that your majesty bears rightly the title of the Most Christian Queen. These nine words which your majesty has uttered, have become the sacred banner of all true souls, and they will cause the golden days to come back, as they once dawned upon Paris when the Dauphin of France made his entry into the capital, and it could be said with truth to the future queen, Marie Antoinette, 'Here are a hundred thousand lovers of your person.' "

The queen was no longer able to master her deep emotion. She who had had the courage to display a proud and defiant mien to her enemies and assailants, could not conceal the intensity of her feeling when hearing words of such devotion, and uttered a cry, then choked with emotion, and at length burst into a torrent of tears. Equally astonished and ashamed, she covered her face with her hands, but the tears gushed out between her white tapering fingers, and would not be withheld. They had been so long repressed behind those proud eyelids, that now, despite the queen's will, they forced their way with double power and intensity.

But only for a moment did the proud-spirited queen allow herself to be overcome by the gentle and deeply-moved woman; she quickly collected herself and raised her head.

"I thank you, sir, I thank you," she said, breathing more freely, "you have done me good, and these tears, though not the first which grief and anger have extorted, are the first for a long time which have sprung from what is almost joy. Who knows whether I shall ever be able to shed such tears again! And who knows," she continued, with a deep sigh, "whether I do not owe these tears more to your wish to do me good, than to true and real gains? I bethink me now—you say all good citizens of Paris repeat my words, all the well-disposed are satisfied with my decision. But, ah! I fear that the number of these is very small, and that the golden days of the past will never return! And is not your appearance here to-day a proof of this? Did you not come here because the people insult and calumniate me, and because you considered it needful to throw around me your protection, which is now mightier than the royal purple and the lilies of the throne of France?"

"Madame, time must be granted to the misguided people to return to the right way," said Lafayette, almost with a supplicating air. "They must be dealt with as we deal with defiant, naughty children, which can be brought back to obedience and submission better by gentle speech and apparent concession than by rigidity and severity. On this account I ventured to ask your majesty to intrust me for a little while with the care of your sacred person, and, in order that I may satisfy my duty, that you would graciously appoint the time when your majesty will take your walks here in the park and garden, so that I can make my arrangements accordingly."

"In order to make a fence out of your National Guards, protected by which the Queen of France may not become visible to the hate of the people, and behind which she may be secure against the attacks of her enemies!" cried Marie Antoinette. "No, sir, I cannot accept this! It shall at least be seen that I am no coward, and that I will not hide myself from those who come to attack me!"

"Your majesty," said Bailly, "I conjure you, do this out of compassion for us, for all your faithful servants who tremble for the peace and security of your majesty, and allow M. de Lafayette to keep the brutality of the people away from you, and protect you in your walks."

"Sufficient, gentlemen," cried Marie Antoinette, impatiently. "You now know my fixed resolve, and it is not necessary to discuss it further. I will not hide myself from the people, and I will confront them under the simple protection of God. Defended by Him, and sustained by the conviction that I have not merited the hate with which I am pursued, I will continue to meet the subjects of the king fearlessly, with an unveiled head, and only God and my fate shall judge between me and them! I thank you, gentlemen, for your zeal and your care, and you may be sure that I shall never forget it. But now farewell, gentlemen! It is growing cold, and I should like to return to the palace."

"Will your majesty not have the kindness to allow us both to mingle with your train, and accompany you to the palace?" asked Lafayette.

"I came hither, attended by only two lackeys, who are waiting outside the pavilion," answered the queen. "You know that I have laid aside the court etiquette which used to attend the queen upon her walks, and which do not allow the free enjoyment of nature. My enemies charge me with this as an offence, and consider it improper that the Queen of France should take a walk without a brilliant train of courtiers, and like any other human being. But I think that the people ought not to be angry at this, and they may take it as a sign that I am not so proud and unapproachable as I am generally believed to be. And so farewell, gentlemen!"

She graciously waved her hand toward the door, and, with a gentle inclination of her head, dismissed the two gentlemen, who, with a sad bearing, withdrew, and left the pavilion.

"Come, my son," said the queen, "we will return to the palace."

"By the same way that we came, shall we not, mamma?" asked the dauphin, taking the extended hand of the queen, and pressing it to his lips.

"You will not weep again if the people shout and laugh?" asked Marie Antoinette. "You will not be afraid any more?"

"No, I will not be afraid any more. Oh, you shall be satisfied with me, mamma queen! I have paid close attention to all that you said to the two gentlemen, and I am very glad that you did not allow M. de Lafayette to walk behind us. The people would then have believed that we are afraid, and now they shall see that we are not so at all."

"Well, come, my child, let us go," said Marie Antoinette, giving her hand to her son, and preparing to leave the pavilion.

But on the threshold the dauphin stopped, and looked imploringly up into the face of his mother.

"I should like to ask you something, mamma queen."

"Well, what is it, my little Louis? What do you wish?"

"I should like to have you allow me to go alone, else the people would believe that I am afraid and want you to lead me. And I want to be like the Chevalier Bayard, about whom the Abbé talked with me to-day. I want to be *sans peur et sans reproche*, like Bayard."

"Very well, chevalier," said the queen, with a smile, "then walk alone and free by my side."

"No, mamma, if you will allow me, I will walk before you. The knights always walk in advance of the ladies, so as to ward off any danger which may be in the way. And I am your knight, mamma, and I want to be as long as I live. Will you allow it, my royal lady?"

"I allow it! So go in front, Chevalier Louis Charles! We will take the same way back by which we came."

The dauphin sprang over the little square in front of the pavilion, and down the alley which led to the Arcadia Walk along the side of the quay.

Before the little staircase which led up to this walk, he stopped and turned his pretty head round to the queen, who, followed by the two lackeys, was walking slowly and quietly along.

"Well, Chevalier Bayard," asked the queen, with a smile, "what are you stopping for?"

"I am only waiting for your majesty," replied the child, gravely. "Here is where my knightly service commences, for here it is that danger begins."

"It is true," said the queen, as she stopped at the foot of the steps and listened to the loud shouting which now became audible. "One would think that a storm had been sweeping over the ocean, there is such a thundering sound. But you know, my son, that the storms lie in God's hand, and that He protects those who trust in Him. Think of that, my child, and do not be afraid!"

"Oh, I am not afraid!" cried the boy, and he sprang up the stairs like a gazelle.

The queen quickened her steps a little, and seemed to be giving her whole attention to her son, who went before her with such a happy flow of spirits, and appeared to hear nothing of what was passing around her. And yet, behind the fence which ran along the left side of the Arcadia Walk all the way to the quay, was a dense mass of people, head behind head, and all their blazing eyes were directed at the queen, and words of hate, malediction, and threatening followed her every step which she took forward.

"See, see," cried a woman, with dishevelled hair, which streamed out from her round cap, and fell down over her red, angry face—"see, that is the baker's woman, and the monkey that jumps in front of her is the apprentice-boy! They can dress themselves up and be fine, for all is well with them, and they can eat cakes, while we have to go hungry. But wait, only wait! times will be different by and by, and we shall see the baker-woman as hungry as we. But when we have the bread, we will give her none—no, we will give her none!"

"No, indeed, we will give her none!" roared, and cried, and laughed, and howled the mob. And they all pressed closer up to the fence, and naked arms and clinched fists were thrust through the palings, and threatened the queen, and the dauphin, who walked in front of his mother.

"Will he be able to bear it? Will my poor boy not weep with fear and anxiety?" That was the only thought of the queen, as she walked on past the angry roars of the crowd. To the dauphin alone all her looks were directed; not once did she glance at the fence, behind which the populace roared like a pack of lions.

All at once the breath of the queen stopped, and her heart ceased beating, with horror. She saw directly at the place where the path turned and ran away from the fence, but where, before making the turn, it ran very near the fence, the bare arm of a man extended through the paling as far as possible, and stretching in fact half-way across the path, as if it were a turnpike-bar stopping the way.

The eyes of the queen, when they fell upon this dreadful, powerful arm, turned at once in deep alarm to the dauphin. She saw him hesitate a little in his hurried course, and then go slowly forward. The queen quickened her steps in order to come up with the dauphin before he should reach the danger which confronted him. The people outside of the fence, when they saw the manœuvre of the man who was forcing his arm still farther in, stopped their shouting and lapsed into a breathless, eager silence, as sometimes is the case in a storm, between the successive bursts of wind and thunder.

Every one felt that the touch of that threatening arm and that little child might be like the contact of steel and flint, and elicit sparks which should kindle the fires of another revolution. It was this feeling which made the crowd silent; the same feeling compelled the queen to quicken her steps, so that she was close to the dauphin before he had reached this terrible turnpike-bar.

"Come here, my son," cried the queen, "give me your hand!"

But before she had time to grasp the hand of the little prince, he sprang forward and stood directly in front of the outstretched arm.

"My God! what will he do?" whispered the queen to herself.

At the same instant, there resounded from behind the fence a loud, mighty bravo, and a thousand voices took it up and cried, "Bravo! bravo!"

The dauphin had stretched up his little white hand and laid it upon the brown, clinched fist that was stretched out toward him, and nodded pleasantly at the man who looked down so fiercely upon him.

"Good-day, sir!" he said, with a loud voice—"good-day!"

And he took hold with his little hand of the great hand of the man and shook it a little, as in friendly salutation.

"Little knirps," roared the man, "what do you mean, and how dare you lay your little paw on the claws of the lion?"

"Sir," said the boy, smiling, "I thought you were stretching out your hand to reach me with it, and so I give you mine, and say, 'Good-day, sir!'"

"And if I wanted, I could crush your hand in my fist as if it were in a vise," cried the man, holding the little hand firmly.

"You shall not do it," cried hundreds and hundreds of voices in the crowd. "No, Simon, you shall not hurt the child."

"Who of you could hinder me if I wanted to?" asked the man, with a laugh. "See here, I hold the hand of the future King of France in my fist, and I can break it if I want to, and make it so that it can never lift the sceptre of France. The little monkey thought he would take hold of my hand and make me draw it back, and now my hand has got his and holds it fast. And mark this, boy, the time is past when kings seized us and trod us down; now we seize them and hold them fast, and do not let them go unless we will."

"Sir!" cried the queen, motioning back with a commanding gesture the two lackeys who were hurrying up to release the dauphin from the hand of the man, "sir, I beg you to withdraw your hand, and not to hinder us in our walk."

"Ah! you are there, too, madame, the baker's wife, are you?" cried the man, with a horrid laugh. "We meet once more, and the eyes of our most beautiful queen fall again upon the dirty, pitiable face of such a poor, wretched creature as, in your heavenly eyes, the cobbler Simon is!"

"Are you Simon the cobbler?" asked Marie Antoinette. "It is true, I bethink me now, I have spoken with you once before. It was when I carried the prince here, for the first time, to Notre Dame, that God would bless him, and that the people might see him. You stood then by my carriage, sir!"

"Yes, it is true," answered Simon, visibly flattered.

"You have, at least, a good memory, queen. But you ought to have paid attention to what I said to you. I am no 'sir,' I am a simple cobbler, and earn my poor bit of bread in the sweat of my brow, while you strut about in your glory and happiness, and cheat God out of daylight. Then I held the hand of your daughter in my fist, and she cried out for fear, merely because a poor fellow like me touched her."

"But, Mr. Simon, you see very plainly that I do not cry out," said the dauphin, with a smile. "I know that you do not want to do me any harm, and I ask you to be so good as to take away your arm, that my mamma can go on in her walk."

"But, suppose that I do not do as you want me to?" asked the cobbler, defiantly. "I suppose it would come that your mamma would dictate to me, and perhaps call some soldiers, and order them to shoot the dreadful people?"

"You know, Master Simon, that I give no such command, and never gave any such," said the queen, quickly. "The king and I love our people, and never would give orders to our soldiers to fire upon them."

"Because you would not be sure, madame, that the soldiers would obey your commands, if you should," laughed Simon. "Since we got rid of the Swiss guards, there are no soldiers left who would let themselves be torn in pieces for their king and queen; and you know well that if the soldiers should fire the first shot at us, the people would tear the soldiers in pieces afterward. Yes, yes, the fine days at Versailles are past; here, in Paris, you must accustom yourself to ask, instead of command, and the arm of a single man of the people is enough to stop the Queen and the Dauphin of France."

"You are mistaken, sir," said the queen, whose proud heart could no longer be restrained, and allow her to take this humble stand; "the Queen of France and her son will no longer be detained by you in their walk."

And with a quick movement she caught the dauphin, struck back at the same moment the fist of the cobbler, snatched the boy away like lightning, and passed by before Simon had time to put his arm back.

The people, delighted with this energetic and courageous action of the queen—the people, who would have howled with rage, if the queen had ordered her lackeys to push the cobbler back, now roared with admiration and with pleasure, to see the proud-hearted woman have the boldness to repel the assailant, and to free herself from him. They applauded, they laughed, they shouted from thousands upon thousands of throats, "Long live the queen! Long live the dauphin!" and the cry passed along like wildfire through the whole mass of spectators behind the fence, and all eyes followed the tall and proud figure of the queen as she walked away.

Only the eyes of Simon pursued her with a malicious glare, and his clinched fists threatened her behind her back.

"She shall pay for this!" he muttered, with a withering curse. "She has struck back my hand to-day, but the day will come when she will feel it upon her neck, and when I will squeeze the hand of the little rascal so that he shall cry out with pain! I believe now, what Marat has so often told me, that the time of vengeance is come, and that we must bring the crown down and tread it under our feet, that the people may rule! I will have my share in it. I will help bring it down, and tread it under foot. I hate the handsome Austrian woman, who perks up her nose, and thinks herself better than my wife; and if the golden time has come of which Marat speaks, when the people are the master, and the king is the servant, Marie Antoinette shall be my waiting-maid, and her son shall be my chore-boy, and his buckle shall make acquaintance with my shoe-straps!"

And while Master Simon was muttering this to himself, he was making a way through the crowd with those great elbows of his, a slipping along the fence, to be able to follow as long as possible the tall figure of the queen, who was now leading the dauphin by the hand, traversing the Arcadian Walk. At the end of it was the fence which led into the little garden reserved for the royal family. Through the iron gate, hard by, adorned with the arms of the kings of France, Marie Antoinette entered an asylum, which had been saved to the crown, free from the intrusion of the people, and she drew a free breath when one of the lackeys closed the gate, and she heard the key grate in the lock.

She stood still a moment to regain her composure, and then she felt that her feet were trembling, and that she scarcely had the power to go farther. It would have been a relief to her to have fallen there upon her knees, and poured all her sorrows and trials into the ear of God. But there were the lackeys behind her; there was her little son, looking up to her with his great eyes; and there was that dreadful cry coming up from the quay like the roaring of the sea.

The queen could not utter a word of grief or sorrow, she could not sink to the ground in her weakness; she had to show a cheerful face to her son, and a proud brow to her servants. God only could look into her heart and see the tears which glowed there like burning coals. Yet in all her sadness she had a feeling of triumph, of proud satisfaction. She had preserved her freedom, her independence; she was not Lafayette's prisoner! No, the Queen of France had not put herself under the protection of the people's general; she had not given him the power of watching her with his hated National Guard, and of saying to them: "At this or that hour the queen takes her walks, and, that she may recreate herself, we will protect her against the rage of the people!"

No, she had defended herself, she had remained the queen all the while, the free queen, and she had gained a victory over the people by showing them that she did not fear them.

"Mamma," cried the dauphin, interrupting her in her painful and proud thoughts—"mamma, there comes the king, there comes my papa! Oh, he will be glad to hear that I was so courageous!"

The queen quickly stooped down and kissed him. "Yes, truly, my little Bayard, you have done honor to your great exemplar, and you have really been a little chevalier *sans peur et sans reproche.* But, my child, true bravery does not glory in its great deeds, and does not desire others to admire them, but keeps silent and leaves it to others to talk about them!"

"Mamma, I will be silent, too," cried the boy, with glowing eyes. "Oh, you shall see that I can be silent, and not talk at all about myself."

The king meanwhile, followed by some gentlemen and servants, was coming forward with unaccustomed haste, and, in his eagerness to reach his wife, he had not noticed the beds, but was treading under foot the last fading flowers of autumn.

"You are here at last, Marie," said he, when he was near enough to speak. "I wanted to go to meet you, to conduct you hither out of the park. You were gone very long, and I worried about you."

"Why worried, sire?" asked the queen. "What danger could threaten me in our garden?"

"Do not seek to hide any thing from me, Marie," said Louis, with a sigh. "I know every thing! The hate of the people denies us any longer the enjoyment of the open air! Lafayette and Bailly were with me after they were dismissed by you. They told me that you had given no favor to their united request, and that you would not grant to General Lafayette the right to protect you while you are taking your walks."

"I hope your majesty is satisfied with me," answered Marie Antoinette. "You feel, like me, that it is a new humiliation for us if we are to allow our very enjoyment of nature to be under the control of the people's general, and if even the air is no longer to be the *free* air for us!"

"I have only thought that in such unguarded walks you would be threatened with danger," answered the king, perplexed. "Lafayette has painted to me in such dark and dreadful colors, and I have so painfully had to confess that he speaks the truth, that I could only think of your safety, and take no other point of view than to see you sheltered from the attacks of your enemies, and from the rage of these factions. I have therefore approved Lafayette's proposal, and allowed him to protect your majesty on your walks."

"But you have not fixed definite hours for my walks? You have not done that, sire, have you?"

"I have indeed done that," answered the king, gently. "I am familiar with your habits, and know that in autumn and winter you usually take your walks between twelve and two, and in summer afternoons between five and seven. I have therefore named these hours to General Lafayette."

The queen heaved a deep sigh. "Sire," she said, softly, "you yourself are binding tighter and tighter the chains of our imprisonment. To-day you limit our freedom to two poor hours, and that will be a precedent for others to continue what you have begun. We shall after this walk for two hours daily under the protection of M. de Lafayette, but there will come a time when this protection will not suffice, and no security will be great enough for us. For the royal authority which shows itself weak and dependent, and which does not draw power from itself—the royalty which suffers its crown to be borne up for it by the hands of others, confesses thereby that it is too weak to bear the burden itself. Oh, sire, I would rather you had let me break away from the rage of the people, while I might be walking unguarded, than be permitted to take my daily walks under the protection of M. de Lafayette!"

"You see every thing in too dark and sad a light," cried the king. "Every thing will come out right if we are only wise and carefully conform to circumstances, and by well-timed concessions and admissions propitiate this hate and bring this enmity to silence."

The queen did not reply; she stooped down to the dauphin, and, pressing a kiss upon his locks, whispered: "Now you may tell every thing, Louis. It is not longer necessary to keep silent about any thing, for silence were useless! So tell of your heroism, my son!"

"Is it of heroism that you talk?" said the king, whose nice ear had caught the words of the queen.

"Yes, of heroism, sire," answered Marie Antoinette. "But it is with us as with Don Quixote; we believed that we were fighting for our honor and our throne; now we must confess that we only fought against windmills. I beg you now, sire, to inform General Lafayette that it is not necessary to call out his National Guards on my account, I shall not walk again!"

And the queen kept her word. Never again during the winter did she go down into the gardens and park of the Tuileries. She never gave Lafayette occasion to protect her, but she at least gained thereby what Lafayette wanted to reach by his National Guard—she held the populace away from the Tuileries. At first they stood in dense masses day after day along the fence of the park and the royal garden, but when they saw that Marie Antoinette would no more expose herself to their curious and evil glances, they grew tired of waiting for her, and withdrew from the neighborhood of the Tuileries,—but only to repair to their clubs and listen to the raving speeches which Marat, Santerre, and other officers, hurled like poisoned arrows at the queen—only to go into the National Assembly and hear Mirabeau and Robespierre, Danton, Chenier, Pétion, and all the rest, the assembled representatives of the nation, launch their thundering philippics against a royalty appointed by the grace of God, and causing the people to believe that it was a royalty appointed by the wrath of God.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN ST. CLOUD.

THE winter was passed—a sad dismal winter for the royal family, and for Marie Antoinette in particular! None of those festivities, those diversions, those simple and innocent joys, which are wont to adorn the life of a woman and of a queen!

Marie Antoinette is no more a queen who commands, who sees around her a throng of respectful courtiers, zealously listening to every word that falls from her lips; Marie Antoinette is a grave solitary woman, who works much, thinks much, makes many plans for saving the kingdom and the throne, and sees all these plans shipwrecks on the indecision and weakness of her husband.

Far away from the queen lay those happy times when every day brought new joys and new diversions; when the dawn of a summer morning made the queen happy, because it promised her a delightful evening, and one of those charming idyls at Trianon. The brothers of the king, the schoolmaster and mayor of Trianon, had left France and had located themselves at Coblentz on the Rhine; the Polignacs had fled to England; the Princess Lamballe, too, had, at the wish of the queen, gone to negotiate with Pitt, in order to implore the all-powerful minister of George III. to give to the oppressed French crown more material and effectual support than was afforded by the angry and bitter words which he hurled in Parliament against the riotous and rebellious French nation. The Counts de Besenval and Coigny, the Marquis de Lauzun, and Baron d'Adhémar, all the privileged friends of the summer days at Trianon and the winter days of Versailles, all, all, were gone. They had fled to Coblentz, and were at the court of the French princes. There they spun their intrigues, sought to excite a European war against France; from there they hurled their flaming torches into France, their calumnies against Queen Marie Antoinette, the Austrian woman. She alone was accountable for all the misfortunes and the disturbances of France, she alone had given occasion for the distrust now felt against royalty. On her head fell the curse and the burden of all the faults and sins which the French court had for a hundred years committed. There must be a sacrificial lamb, to be thrown into the arms glistening with spears and daggers, of a revolution which thirsted for blood and vengeance, and Marie Antoinette had to be the victim. In her bleeding heart the spirits glowing with hate might cool themselves, and there the evil which her predecessors had done, was to be atoned for. Many a wrong had been done, and the French nation had, no doubt, a right to be angry and to rage as does the lion for a long time kept in subjection, when at last, touched too much by the iron of its keeper, it rises in its wildness, and with withering greed, tears him in pieces from whom it has suffered so long and so much. The French people rose just as the incensed lion does, and determined to wreak their vengeance on their keepers, on those whom they had so long called their lords and rulers.

To pacify the lion some prey must be thrown to him, and to him who thirsts for vengeance and blood, a human offering must be brought to propitiate him.

Marie Antoinette had to be the offering to the lion! Her blood had to flow for the sins of the Bourbons! On her all the anger, the exasperation, the rage of the people must concentrate! She must bear the blame of all the miseries and the needs of France! She must satisfy the hunger for vengeance, in order that when the lion is appeased it can be made placable and patient again, the chains put on which he has broken in his rage—the chains, however, to which, when his rage is past, he must again submit.

The queen, the queen is to b ame for all! Marie Antoinette has brought royalty into discredit; the Austrian woman has brought the hatred of the French nation upon herself, and she must atone for it, she alone!

Libels and calumnies are forged against the queen by those who were once the friends and cavaliers of the queen—cavaliers no longer, but cavillers now; the poisoned arrows are sent to France to be directed against the head of the queen, to destroy first her honor and good name, and then to make her a prey for scorn and contempt.

If the lion stills his rage and cools his hate with Marie Antoinette as his victim, he will relax again and bow to his king, for it is time for these royal princes to return to France and their loved Paris once more.

The Count de Provence is the implacable enemy of the queen; he can never forgive her for gaining the heart of the king her husband, and leaving no influence for his wise, clever brother. The Count de Provence is avaricious and crafty. He sees that an abyss has opened before the throne of the lilies, and that it will not close again! It must, therefore, be filled up! A reconciliation will not be possible in a natural way, and artificial methods must be found to accomplish it. Louis XVI. will not be saved, and Marie Antoinette shall not be! The two, perhaps, can fill up the abyss that yawns between the throne of the lilies and the French people. They, perhaps, may fill it up, and then a way may be made for the Count de Provence, the successor of his brother.

The Count d'Artois was once the friend of the queen, the only one of the royal family who wished her well, and who defended her sometimes against the hatred of the royal aunts and sisters-in-law, and the crafty brother. But while living in Coblentz, the Count d'Artois had become the embittered enemy of Marie Antoinette. He had heard it so often said on all sides that the queen by her levity, her extravagance, and her intrigues, was the cause of all, that she alone had brought about the revolution, that he at last believed it, and turned angrily against the royal woman, whose worst offence in the eyes of the prince lay in this, that she had been the occasion of his enforced exile to Coblentz.

And Marie Antoinette knew all these intrigues which were forged by the prince in Coblentz against herself—knew about all the calumnies that were set in circulation there; she read the libels and pamphlets which the storm-wind of revolution shook from the dry tree of monarchy like withered autumn leaves, and scattered through all France, that they might be everywhere found and read.

"They will kill me," she would often say, with a sigh, after reading these pamphlets steeped with hate, and written in blood—"yes, they will kill me, but with me they will kill the king and the monarchy too. The revolution will triumph over us all, and hurl us all together down into the grave."

But still she would make efforts to control the revolution and restore the monarchy again out of its humiliations. The Emperor Joseph II., brother of the queen, once said of himself, "I am a royalist, because that is my business." Marie Antoinette was a royalist not because it was her business; she was a royalist by conviction, a royalist in her soul, her mind, and her inmost nature. For this she would defend the monarchy; for this she would contend against the revolution, until she should either constrain it to terms or be swallowed up in it.

All her efforts, all her cares, were directed only to this, to kindle in the king the same courage that animated her, to stir him with the same fire that burned in her soul. But alas! Louis XVI. was no doubt a good man and a kind father, but he was no king. He had no doubt the wish to restore the monarchy, but he lacked the requisite energy and strong will. Instead of controlling the revolution with a fiery spirit, he sought to conciliate it by concession and mild measures; and instead of checking it, he himself went down before it.

But Marie Antoinette could not and would not give up hope. As the king would not act, she would act for him; as he would not take part in politics, she would do so for him. With glowing zeal she plunged into business, spent many hours each day with the ministers and dependants of the court, corresponded with foreign lands, with her brother the Emperor Leopold, and her sister, Queen Caroline of Naples, wrote to them in a cipher intelligible only to them, and sent the letters through the hands of secret agents, imploring of them assistance and help for the monarchy.

In earnest labor, in unrelieved care and business, the queen's days now passed; she sang, she laughed no more; dress had no longer charms for her; she had no more conferences with Mademoiselle Bertin, her milliner; her hairdresser, M. Leonard, had no more calls upon his genius for new *coiffures* for her fair hair; a simple, dark dress, that was the toilet of the queen, a lace handkerchief round the neck, and a feather was her only head-dress.

Once she had rejoiced in her beauty, and smiled at the flatteries which her mirror told her when it reflected her face; now she looked with indifference at her pale, worn face, with its sharp grave features, and it awoke no wonder within her when the mirror told her that the queen of France, in spite of her thirty-six years, was old; that the roses on her cheeks had withered, and that care had drawn upon her brow those lines which age could not yet have done. She did not grieve over her lost beauty; she looked with complacency at that matron of six-and-thirty years whose beautiful hair showed the traces of that dreadful night in October. She had her picture painted, in order to send it to London, to the truest of her friends, the Princess Lamballe, and with her own hands she wrote beneath it the words: "Your sorrows have whitened your hair."

And yet in this life full of cares, full of work, full of pain and humiliation—in these sad days of trouble and resignation, there were single gleams of sunshine, scattered moments of happiness.

It was a ray of sunshine when this sad winter in the Tuileries was past, and the States-General allowed the royal family to go to St. Cloud and spend the summer there. Certainly it was a new humiliation for the king to receive permission to reside in his own summer palace of St. Cloud. But the States-General called themselves the pillars of the throne, and the king who sat upon this shaking throne was very dependent upon its support.

In St. Cloud there was at least a little freedom, a little solitude and stillness. The birds sang in the foliage, the sun lighted up the broad halls of the palace, in which a few faithful ones gathered around the queen and recalled at least a touch of the past happiness to her brow. In St. Cloud she was again the queen, she held her court there. But how different was this from the court of former days.

No merry laughter, no cheerful singing resounded through these spacious halls; no pleasant ladies, in light, airy, summer costume swept through the fragrant apartments; M. d'Adhémar no longer sits at the spinet, and sings with his rich voice the beautiful arias from the opera "Richard of the Lion Heart," in which royalty had its apotheosis, and in which the singer Garat had excited all Paris to the wildest demonstrations of delight! And not all Paris, but Versailles as well, and in Versailles the royal court!

Louis XVI. himself had been in rapture at the aria which Garat sang with his flexible tenor voice in so enchanting a manner—"Oh, Richard! oh, mon roi!"—an aria which had once procured him a triumph in the very theatre. For when Garat began this air with his full voice, and every countenance was directed to the box where the royal family were sitting, the whole theatre rose, and the hundreds upon hundreds present had joined in the loud, jubilant strains—"Oh, Richard! oh, mon roi!"

Louis XVI. was grateful to the spirited singer, who, in that stormy time, had the courage to publicly offer him homage, and he had therefore acceded to the request of the queen, that Garat should be invited to the private concerts of the queen at Versailles, and give her instruction on those occasions in the art of singing.

Marie Antoinette thought of those pleasant days of the past, as she sat in the still, deserted music-room, where the instruments stood silent by the wall—where there were no hands to entice the cheerful melodies from the strings, as there had once been.

"I wish that I had never sung duets with Garat," whispered the queen to herself. "The king allowed me, but yet I ought not to have done it. A queen has no right to be free, merry, and happy. A queen can practise the fine arts only alone, and in the silence of her own apartments. I would I had never sung with Garat." *

She sat down before the spinet and opened it. Her fingers glided softly over the keys, and for the first time, in long months of silence, the room resounded with the tones of music.

But, alas! it was no cheerful music which the fingers of the queen drew from the keys; it was only the notes of pain, only cries of grief; and yet they recalled the happy by-gone times—those golden, blessed days, when the Queen of France was the friend of the arts, and when she received her early teacher, the great maestro and chevalier, Gluck, in Versailles; when she took sides for him against the Italian maestro Lully, and when all Paris divided into two parties, the Gluckists and Lullyists, waging a bloodless war against each other. Happy Paris! At that time the interests of art alone busied all spirits, and the battle of opinions was conducted only with the pen. Gluck owed it to the mighty influence of the queen that his opera "Alcestes" was brought upon the stage; but at its first representation the Lullyists gained the victory, and condemned it. In despair, Gluck left the opera-house, driven by hisses into the dark street. A friend followed him and detained him, as he was hurrying away, and spoke in the gentlest tones. But Gluck interrupted him with wild violence: "Oh, my friend!" cried he, falling on the neck of him who was expressing his kindly sympathy, "'Alcestes' has fallen!" But his friend pressed his hand, and said, "Fallen? Yes, 'Alcestes' has fallen! It has fallen from heaven!"

The queen thought of this as she sat before the spinet—thought how moved Gluck was when he related this answer of his friend, and that he, who had been so kind, was the Duke d'Adhémar.

She had thanked him for this gracious word by giving him her hand to kiss, and Adhémar, kneeling, had

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* The queen's own words.—See "Mémoires de Madame de Campan," vol. ii.

pressed his lips to her hand. And that was the same Baron Adhémar who was now at Coblentz assisting the prince to forge libels against herself, and who was himself the author of that shameless lampoon which ridiculed the musical studies of the queen, and even the duet which she had sung with Garat!

Softly glided her fingers over the keys, softly flowed over her pale, sunken cheeks two great tears—tears which she shed as she thought of the past—tears full of bitterness and pain! But no, no, she would not weep; she shook the tears from her eyes, and struck the keys with a more vigorous touch. Away, away, those recollections of ingratitude and faithlessness! Art shall engage her thoughts in the music-room, and to Gluck and "Alcestes" the hour belongs!

The queen struck the keys more firmly, and began to play the noble "Love's Complaint," of Gluck's opera. Unconsciously her lips opened, and with loud voice and intense passionate expression, she sang the words, "Oh, crudel, non posso in vere, tu lo sui, senza dite!"

At the first notes of this fine voice the door in the rear of the room had lightly opened—the one leading to the garden—and the curly head of the dauphin was thrust in. Behind him were Madame de Tourzel and Madame Elizabeth, who, like the prince, were listening in breathless silence to the singing of the queen.

As she ended, and when the voice of Marie Antoinette was choked in a sigh, the dauphin flew with extended arms across the hall to his mother.

"Mamma queen," cried he, beaming with joy, "are you singing again? I thought my dear mamma had forgotten how to sing. But she has begun to sing again, and we are all happy once more."

Marie Antoinette folded the little fellow in her arms, and did not contradict him, and nodded smilingly to the two ladies, who now approached and begged the queen's pardon for yielding to the pressing desires of the dauphin, and entering without permission.

"Oh, mamma, my dear mamma queen," said the prince, in the most caressing way, "I have been very industrious to-day; the abbé was satisfied with me, and praised me, because I wrote well and learned my arithmetic well. Won't you give me a reward for that, mamma queen?"

"What sort of a reward do you want, my child?" asked the queen, smiling.

"Say, first, that you will give it."

"Well, yes, I will give it, my little Louis; now tell me what it is."

"Mamma queen, I want you to sing your little Louis a song; and," he added, nodding at the two ladies, "that you allow these friends of mine to hear it."

"Well, my child, I will sing for you," answered Marie Antoinette, "and our good friends shall hear it."

The countenance of the boy beamed with pleasure; with alacrity he rolled an easy-chair up to the piano, and took his seat in it in the most dignified manner.

Madame Elizabeth seated herself near him on a tabouret, and Madame de Tourzel leaned on the back of the dauphin's chair.

"Now sing, mamma, now sing," asked the dauphin.

Marie Antoinette played a prelude, and as her eyes fell upon the group they lighted up with joy, and then turned upward to God with a look of thankfulness.

A few minutes before she had felt alone and sad: she had thought of absent friends in bitter pain, and now, as if fate would remind her of the happiness which still remained to her, it sent her the son and the sister-in-law, both of whom loved her so tenderly, and the gentle and affectionate Madame de Tourzel, whom Marie Antoinette knew to be faithful and constant unto death.

The flatterers and courtiers, the court ladies and cavaliers, are no longer in the music-room; the enraptured praises no longer accompany the songs of the queen; but, out of the easy-chair, in which the Duchess de Polignac had sat so often, now looks the beautiful blond face of her son, and his beaming countenance speaks more eloquently to her than the flatteries of friends. On the tabouret, now occupied by her sister-in-law, Madame Eilzabeth, De Dillon has often sat—the handsome Dillon, and his glowing, admiring looks have often, perhaps, in spite of his own will, said more to the queen than she allowed herself to understand, as her heart thrilled in sweet pain and secret raptures under those glances! How pure and innocent is the face which now looks out from this chair—the face of an angel who bears God in his heart and on his countenance.

"Pray for me; pray that God may let me drink of Lethe, that I may forget all that has ever been! Pray that I may be satisfied with what remains, and that my heart may bow in humility and patience!"

Thus thought the queen as she began to sing, not one of her great arias which she had studied with Garat, and which the court used to applaud, but one of those lovely little songs, full of feeling and melody, which did not carry one away in admiration, but which filled the heart with joy and deep emotion.

With suspended breath, and great eyes directed fixedly to Marie Antoinette, the dauphin listened, but gradually his eyes fell, and motionless and with grave face the child sat in his arm-chair.

Marie Antoinette saw it, and began to sing one of those cradle-songs of the "Children's Friend," which Berquin had written, and Gretry had set to music so charmingly.

How still was it in the music-room, how full and touching was the voice of the queen as she began the last verse:

"Oh, sleep, my child, now go to sleep,
Thy crying grieves my heart;
Thy mother, child, has cause to weep,
But sleep and feel no smart." *

All was still in the music-room when the last words were sung; motionless, with downcast eyes, sat the dauphin long after the sad voice of the queen had ceased.

"Ah, see," cried Madame Elizabeth, with a smile, "I believe now our Louis has fallen asleep."

But the child quickly raised his head and looked at the smiling young princess with a reproachful glance.

"Ah, my dear aunt," cried he, reprovingly, "how could any one sleep when mamma sings?" †

Marie Antoinette drew the child within her arms, and her countenance beamed with delight. Never had the

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* "Dors, mon enfant, clos ta paupière,
Tes cris me déchirent la cœur;
Dors, mon enfant, ta pauvre mère
A bien assez de sa douleur."

† The dauphin's own words.—See Beauchesne, vol. i., p. 27.

queen received so grateful a compliment from the most flattering courtier as these words of her fair-haired boy conveyed, who threw his arms around her neck and nestled up to her.

The Queen of France is still a rich, enviable woman, for she has children who love her; the Queen of France ought not to look without courage into the future, for the future belongs to her son. The throne which now is so tottering and insecure, shall one day belong to him, the darling of her heart, and therefore must his mother struggle with all her power, and with all the means at her command contend for the throne for the Dauphin of France, that he may receive the inheritance of his father intact, and that his throne may not in the future plunge down into the abyss which the revolution has opened.

No, the dauphin, Louis Charles, shall not then think reproachfully of his parents; he shall not have cause to complain that through want of spirit and energy they have imperilled or lost the sacred heritage of his fathers.

No, Queen Marie Antoinette may not halt and lose courage,—not even when her husband has done so, and when he is prepared to humbly bow his sacred head beneath that yoke of revolution, which the heroes and orators selected by the nation have wished to put upon his neck in the name of France.

This makes hers a double duty, to be active, to plan, and work; to keep her head erect, and look with searching eye in all directions to see whence help and deliverance are to come.

Not from without can they come, not from foreign monarchs, nor from the exiled princes. Foreign armies which might march into the country would place the king, who had summoned them to fight with his own people, in the light of a traitor; and the moment that they should pass the frontiers of France, the wrath of the nation would annihilate the royal couple.

Only from those who had called down the danger could help come. The chiefs of the revolution, the men who had raised their threatening voices against the royal couple, must be won over to become the advocates of royalty.

And who was more powerful, who more conspicuous among all these chiefs of the revolution, and all the orators of the National Assembly, than Count Mirabeau!

When he ascended the Speaker's tribune of the National Assembly all were silent, and even his opponents listened with respectful attention to his words, which found an echo through all France; when he spoke, when from his lips the thunder of his speeches resounded, the lightning flashed in his eyes, and his head was like the head of a lion, who, with the shaking of his mane and the power of his anger, destroyed every thing which dared to put itself in his way. And the French nation loved this lion, and listened in reverential silence to the thunder of his speech, and the throne shook before him. And the excitable populace shouted with admiration whenever they saw the lion, and deified that Count Mirabeau, who, with his powerul, lace-cuffed hand, had thrust these words into the face of his own caste: "They have done nothing more than to give themselves the trouble to be born."

The people loved this aristocrat, who was abhorred by his family and the men of his own rank; this count whom the nobility hated because the Third Estate loved him.

CHAPTER XVII.

MIRABEAU.

"COUNT MIRABEAU must be won over," Count de la Marck ventured to say one day to Marie Antoinette. "Count Mirabeau is now the mightiest man in France, and he alone is able to bring the nation back again to the throne."

"It is he," replied the queen, with a glow, "who is most to blame for alienating the nation from the throne. Never will the renegade count be forgiven! Never can the king stoop so low as to pardon this apostate, who frivolously professes the new religion of 'liberty,' and disowns the faith of his fathers."

"Your majesty," replied Count de la Marck, with a sigh, "it may be that in the hand of this renegade lies the future of your son."

The queen trembled, and the proud expression on her features was softened.

"The future of my son?" said she. "What do you mean by that? What has Count Mirabeau to do with the dauphin? His wrath follows us only, his hatred rests upon us alone! I grant that at present he is powerful, but over the future he has no sway. I hope, on the contrary, that the future will avenge the evil that Mirabeau does to us in the present."

"But how does it help, madame, if vengeance hurries him on?" asked Count de la Marck, sadly. "The temple which Samson pulled down was not built again, that Samson might be taken from its ruins; it remained in its dust and fragments, and its glory was gone forever. Oh, I beseech your majesty, do not listen to the voice of your righteous indignation, but only to the voice of prudence. Master your noble, royal heart, and seek to reconcile your adversaries, not to punish them!"

"What do you desire of me?" asked Marie Antoinette, in amazement. "What shall I do?"

"Your majesty must chain the lion," whispered the count. "Your majesty must have the grace to change Mirabeau the enemy into Mirabeau the devoted ally and friend!"

"Impossible, it is impossible!" cried the queen, in horror. "I cannot descend to this. I never can view with friendly looks this monster who is accountable for the horrors of those October days. I can only speak of this man, who has created his reputation out of his crimes, who is a faithless son, a faithless husband, a faithless lover, a faithless aristocrat, and a faithless royalist—I can only speak of him in words of loathing, scorn, and horror! No, rather die than accept assistance from Count Mirabeau! Do you not know, count, that he honors me his queen with his enmity and his contempt? Is it not Mirabeau who caused the States-General to accept the words 'the person of the king is inviolable,' and to reject the words 'and that of the queen?' Was it not Mirabeau who once, when my friends exhorted him to moderation, and besought him to soften his words about the Queen of France, had the grace to answer with a shrug, 'Well, she may keep her life!' Was it not Mirabeau who was to blame for the October days? Was it not Mirabeau who publicly said: 'The king and the queen are lost. The people hate them so, that they would even destroy their corpses?' " *

"Your majesty, Mirabeau said that, not as a threat, but out of pity, and deep concern and sympathy."

"Sympathy!" repeated the queen, "Mirabeau, who hates us!"

"No, your majesty, Mirabeau, who honors his queen, who is ready to give his life for you and for the monarchy, if your majesty will forgive him and receive him as a defender of the throne!"

The queen shuddered, and looked in astonishment and terror at the excited face of Count de la Marck. "Are you speaking of Mirabeau, the tribune of the people," she asked, "the fiery orator of the National Assembly?"

"I am speaking of Count Mirabeau, who yesterday was the enemy of the throne, and who to-day will be a zealous defender, if your majesty will only have it so—if your majesty will only speak a gracious word to him."

"It is impossible, it is impossible!" whispered the queen.

De la Marck continued: "Since he has frequently seen your majesty—since he has had occasion to observe your proud spirit and lofty resignation—a change has taken place in the character of Mirabeau. He is subdued as the lion is subdued, when the beaming eye of a pure soul looks it in the face. He might be of service again, he might be reconciled! He writes, he speaks of his exalted queen with admiration, with enthusiasm; he glows with a longing desire to confess his sins at the feet of your majesty, and to receive your forgiveness."

"Does the king know this?" asked Marie Antoinette. "Has any one told his majesty?"

"I should not have taken the liberty of speaking to your majesty about these things if the king had not authorized me," replied Count de la Marck, bowing. "His majesty recognizes it to be a necessary duty to gain Mirabeau to the throne, and he hopes to have in this matter the coöperation of his exalted wife."

Marie Antoinette sadly shook her head. "I will speak

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* The queen's own words.—See Goncourt, "Marie Antoinette," p. 205.

with his majesty about it," she said, with a sigh, "but only under circumstances of extreme urgency can I submit to this, I tell you in advance."

But the case was of extreme urgency, and when Marie Antoinette had seen it to be so, she kept her word and conformed to it, and commissioned Count de la Marck to tell his friend Mirabeau that the queen would grant him an audience.

But in order that this audience might be of advantage, it must be conducted with the deepest secrecy. No one ought to suspect that Mirabeau, the tribune of the people, the adored hero of the revolution—Mirabeau, who ruled the National Assembly, and Paris itself, whom the freest of the free hailed as their apostle and saviour, who with the power of his eloquence ruled the spirits of thousands and hundreds of thousands of men,—no one could suspect that the leader of the revolution would now become the devoted dependant upon the monarchy, and the paid servant of the king.

Two conditions Mirabeau had named, when Count de la Marck had tried to gain him over in the name of the king: an audience with the queen, and the payment of his debts, together with a monthly pension of a hundred louis-d'or.

"I am paid, but not bought," said Mirabeau, as he received his first payment. "Only one of my conditions is fulfilled, but what will become of the other?"

"And so you still insist on having an audience with the queen?" asked La Marck.

"Yes, I insist upon it," said Mirabeau, with flaming eyes. "If I am to battle and speak for this monarchy, I must learn to respect it. If I am to believe in the possibility of restoring it, I must believe in its capacity of life; I must see that I have to deal with a brave, decided, noble man. The true and real king here is Marie Antoinette; and there is only one man in the whole surroundings of Louis XVI., and that is his wife. I must speak with her, in order to hear and to see whether she is worth the risking of my life, honor, and popularity. If she really is the heroine that I hold her to be, we will both united save the monarchy, and the throne of Louis XVI., whose king is Marie Antoinette. The moment is soon to come when we shall learn what a woman and a child can accomplish, and whether the daughter of Maria Theresa with the dauphin in her arms cannot stir the hearts of the French as her great mother once stirred the Hungarians." *

"Do you then believe the danger is so great," asked La Marck, "that it is necessary to resort to extreme, heroic measures?"

Mirabeau grasped his arm with a sudden movement, and an expression of solemn earnestness filled his lion-like face. "I am convinced of it," he answered, "and I will add, the danger is so great, that if we do not soon meet it and in heroic fashion, it will not be possible to control it. There is no other security for the queen than through the reëstablishment of the royal authority. I believe of her, that she does not desire life without her crown, and I am certain that, in order to keep her life, she must before all things preserve her crown. And I will help her and stand by her in it; and for this end I must myself speak with her and have an audience." †

And Mirabeau, the first man in the revolution had his audience with Marie Antoinette, the dying champion of monarchy.

On the 3rd of July, 1790, the meeting of the queen and Mirabeau took place in the park of St. Cloud. Secrecy and silence surrounded them, and extreme care had been taken to let no one suspect, excepting a few intimate friends, what was taking place on this sequestered, leaf-embowered grass-plat of St. Cloud.

A bench of white marble, surrounded by high oleander and taxus trees, stood at the side of this grass-plat. It was the throne on which Marie Antoinette should receive the homage of her new knight. Mirabeau had on the day before gone from Paris to the estate of his niece, the Marchioness of Aragan. There he spent the night; and the next morning, accompanied by his nephew, M. de Saillant, he walked to the park of St. Cloud.

At the nether gate of the park, which had been left open for this secret visit, Mirabeau took leave of his companion, and extended him his hand.

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* Mirabeau's own words.—See "Marie Antoinette et sa Famille." Par M. de Lescure, p. 478.

† Mirabeau's own words.—See Count de la Marck, "Mirabeau," vol. iii., p. 80

"I do not know," he said, and his voice, which so often had made the windows of the assembly hall shake with its thunder, was now weak and tremulous, "I do not know why this dreadful presentiment creeps over me all at once, and why voices whisper to me, 'Turn back, Mirabeau, turn back! Do not step over the threshold of this door, for there you are stepping into your open grave!'"

"Follow this voice, uncle, there is still time," implored M. de Saillant; "it is with me as it is with you. I, too, have a sad, anxious feeling!"

"May they not have laid snares for me here?" whispered Mirabeau, thoughtfully. "They are capable of every thing, these artful Bourbons. Who knows whether they have not invited me here to take me prisoner, and to cast me, whom they hold to be their most dangerous enemy, into one of their *oubliettes*, their subterranean dungeons? My friend," he continued, hastily, "wait for me here, and if in two or three hours I do not return, hasten to Paris, go to the National Assembly, and announce to them that Mirabeau, moved by the queen's cry of distress, has gone to St. Cloud, and is there held a prisoner."

"I will do it, uncle," said the marquis, "but I do not believe in any such treachery on the part of the queen or her husband. They both know that without Mirabeau they are certainly lost, and that he, perhaps, is able to save them. I fear something entirely different."

"And what do you fear?"

"I fear your enemies in the National Assembly," said M. de Saillant, and with a pained expression. "I fear these enraged republicans, who have begun to mistrust you since you have begun to speak in favor of royalty and monarchy, and since you have even ventured to defend the queen personally against the savage and mean attacks which Marat hurls against Marie Antoinette in his journal, the *Ami du Peuple*."

"It is true," said Mirabeau, with a smile, "they have mistrusted me, these enraged republicans, since then, and they tell me that Pétion, this republican of steel and iron, turned to Danton at the close of my speech, and said: 'This Mirabeau is dangerous to liberty, for there is too much of the blood of the count flowing through the veins of the tribune of the people.' Danton answered him with a smile: 'In that case we must draw off the count's blood from the tribune of the people, that he may either be cured of his reactionary disease or die of it!' "

"And when they told Marat, uncle, that you had spoken angrily and depreciatingly of his attacks upon the queen, he raised his fist threateningly, and cried: 'Mirabeau is a traitor, who wants to sell our new, young liberty to the monarchy. But he will meet the fate of Judas, who sold the Saviour. He will one day atone for it with his head, for if we tap him for his treachery, we shall do for him what Judas did for himself. This Mirabeau Judas must take care of himself.' "

"And do you suppose that this disputatious little toad of a Marat will hang me?" asked Mirabeau, with a scornful smile.

"I think that you must watch him," answered M. de Saillant. "Last evening, in the neighborhood of our villa, I met two disguised men, who, I would swear, were Pétion and Marat; and on our way here, as I looked around, I feel certain that I saw these same disguised figures following us!"

"What if it be?" answered Mirabeau, raising himself up, and looking around him with a proud glance. "The lion does not fear the annoying insect that buzzes about him, he shakes it off with his mane or destroys it with a single stroke of his paw. And Mirabeau fears just as little such insects as Pétion and Marat; they would much better keep out of his way. I will tread them under foot, that is all! And now, farewell, my dear nephew, farewell, and wait for me here!"

He nodded familiarly to his nephew, passed over the threshold, and entered the park, from whose entrance the popular indignation had long since removed the obnoxious words, *De par la Reine*, the garden belonging now to the king only because the nation willed it so.

Mirabeau hastened with an anxious mind and a light step along the walk, and again it seemed to him as if dark spirits were whispering to him, "Turn back, Mirabeau, turn back! for with every step forward you are only going deeper into your grave." He stopped, and with his handkerchief wiped away the drops of cold sweat which gathered upon his forehead.

"It is folly," he said, "perfect folly. "Truly I am as tremulous as a girl going to her first rendezvous. Shame on you, Mirabeau, be a man!"

He shook his head as if he wanted to dispel these evil forebodings, and hastened forward to meet Count de la Marck, who appeared at the bending of the *allée.*

"The queen is already here, and is waiting for you, Mirabeau," said the marquis, with a slight reproach in his voice.

Mirabeau shrugged his shoulders instead of replying, and went on more rapidly. There soon opened in front of them a small grass-plat, surrounded by bushes, and on the bench opposite, the lady in the white, neat dress, with a straw hat on her arm, her hair veiled with black lace—that lady was Marie Antoinette.

Mirabeau stopped in his walk, and fixed a long, searching look upon her. When he turned again to his friend, his face was pale, and bore plain traces of emotion.

"My friend," whispered he to La Marck, "I know not why, but I have a strange feeling! I have not wept since the day on which my father drove me with a curse from the house of my ancestors, but, seeing yonder woman, I could weep, and an unspeakable sympathy fills my soul."

The queen had seen him, too, and had grown pale, and turned tremblingly to the king, who stood beside her, half concealed by the foliage.

"There is the dreadful man!" said Marie Antoinette, with a shudder. "My God! a thrill of horror creeps through all my veins, and if I only look at this monster, I have a feeling as though I should sicken with loathing!" *

"Courage, my dear Marie, courage," whispered the king. "Remember that the welfare of our future, and of our children, perhaps, depends upon this interview. See, he is approaching. Receive him kindly, Marie. I will draw back, for you alone shall have the honor of this day, and monarchy has in you its fairest representative."

"But remain so near me, sire, that you can hear me if I call for help," whispered Marie Antoinette.

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* The queen's own words.—See "Madame de Campan," vol. ii.

The king smiled. "Fear nothing, Marie," he said, "and believe that the danger for Mirabeau is greater than for you. The name of criminal will be fastened not to us, but to Mirabeau, if it shall be known that he has come to visit us here. I will withdraw, for there is Mirabeau."

And the king withdrew into the thicket, while Mirabeau stopped near the queen, and saluted her with a profound bow.

Marie Antoinette rose from her marble seat. At this moment she was not the queen giving an audience, but the anxious lady, advancing to meet danger, and desirous to mitigate it by politeness and smiles.

"Come nearer, count," said Marie Antoinette, still standing. But as he approached, the queen sank slowly upon the seat, and raised her eyes to Mirabeau, with an almost timid look, who now did not seem to her a monster, for his mien was disturbed, and his eyes, which had always been represented as so fearful, had a gentle, respectful expression.

"Count," said the queen, and her voice trembled a little—"count, if I found myself face to face with an ordinary enemy, a man who was aiming at the destruction of monarchy, without seeing of what use it is for the people, I should be taking at this moment a very useless step. But when one talks with a Mirabeau, one is beyond the ordinary conditions of prudence, and hope of his assistance is blended with wonder at the act." *

"Madame," cried Mirabeau, deeply moved, "I have not come here as your enemy, but as your devoted servant, who is ready cheerfully to give his life if he can be of any service to the monarchy."

"You believe, then, that it is a question of life, or, if you prefer, of death, which stands between the French people and the monarchy?" asked the queen, sadly.

"Yes, I am convinced of that," answered Mirabeau. "But I still hope that we can answer the question in favor of the monarchy, provided that the right means are applied in season."

"And what, according to your views, are the right means, count?"

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* The queen's own words.—See "Marie Antoinette et sa Famille." Par M. de Lescure, p. 484.

Mirabeau smiled and looked with amazement into the noble face of the queen, who, with such easy composure, had put into this one short question what for centuries had perplexed the greatest thinkers and statesmen to answer.

"Will your majesty graciously pardon me if I crave permission, before I answer, to put a question in like manner to my exalted queen?"

"Ask on, count," replied Marie Antoinette, with a gentle inclination of her head.

"Well, madame, this is my question: 'Does your majesty purpose and aim at the reëstablishment of the old *régime*, and do you deem it possible to roll the chariot of human history and of politics backward?'"

"You have in your question given the answer as well," said Marie Antoinette, with a sigh. "It is impossible to reërect the same edifice out of its own ruins. One must be satisfied if out of them a house can be built, in which one can manage to live."

"Ah, your majesty," said Mirabeau, with feeling, "this answer is the first ray of light which breaks through the heavy storm-clouds! The new day can be descried and hailed with delight! After hearing this noble answer of your majesty, I look up comforted, and the clouds do not terrify me longer, for I know that they will soon be past—that is, if we employ the right means."

"And now I repeat my question, count, What, according to your view, are the right means?"

"First of all, the recognition of what is wrong," answered Mirabeau, "and then the cheerful and honest will to do what is found to be necessary."

"Well, tell me, what is it that is wrong?"

Mirabeau bowed, and then began to speak to her in his clear, sharp way, which was at the same time so full of energy, of the situation of France, the relation of the various political parties to one another, to the court, and the throne. In strongly outlined sentences he characterized the chiefs of the political clubs, the leaders of the parties in the National Assembly, and spoke of the perilous goal which the demagogues, the men of the extreme Left, aimed at. He did not, from delicacy, speak the word "republican," but he gave the queen to understand that the destruction of the monarchy and the throne, the annihilation of the royal family, was the ultimate object aimed at by all the raving orators and leaders of the extreme Left.

The queen had listened to him with eager, fixed attention, and, at the same time, with a dignified composure; and the earnest, thoughtful look of her large eyes had penetrated and moved Mirabeau more and more, so that his words came from his lips like a stream of fire, and kindled a new hope even in himself.

"All will yet be well," he cried, in conclusion; "we shall succeed in contending with the hidden powers that wish to undermine your majesty's throne, and to take from the hands of your enemies these dangerous weapons of destruction. I shall apply all my power, all my eloquence to this. I will oppose the undertakings of the demagogues; I will show myself to be their public opponent, and zealously serve the monarchy, making use of all such means of help as are adapted to move men's minds, and not to trouble and terrify them, as if freedom and self-government were to be taken from them, and yet which will restore the credit and power of the monarchy."

"Are you, then, with honest and upright heart, a friend of ours?" asked Marie Antoinette, almost supplicatingly. "Do you wish to assist us, and stand by us, with your counsel and help?"

Mirabeau met her inquisitive and anxious look with a cordial smile, a noble and trustworthy expression of face.

"Madame," he said, with his fine, resonant voice, "I defended monarchical principles when I saw only their weakness, and when I did not know the soul nor the thoughts of the daughter of Maria Theresa, and little reckoned upon having such an exalted mediator. I contended for the rights of the throne when I was only mistrusted, when calumny dogged all my steps, and declared me guilty of treachery! I served the monarchy, then, when I knew that from my rightful, but misled king, I should receive neither kindness nor reward. What shall I do now, when confidence animates my spirit, and gratitude has made my duties run directly in the current of my principles? I shall be and remain what I have always been, the defender of monarchy *governed by law*, the apostle of liberty guaranteed by the monarchy." *

"I believe you, count," cried Marie Antoinette, with emotion. "You will serve us with fidelity and zeal, and with your help all will yet be well. I promise you that we will follow your counsels, and act in concord with you. You will put yourself in communication with the king; you will consult him about needful matters, and advise him about the things which are essential to his welfare and that of the people."

"Madame," replied Mirabeau, "I take the liberty of adding this to what has already been said. The most necessary thing is that the royal court leave Paris for a season!"

"That we flee?" asked Marie Antoinette, hastily.

"Not flee, but withdraw," answered Mirabeau. "The exasperated people menace the monarchy, and therefore the threatened crown must for a while be concealed from the people's sight, that they may be brought back to a sense of duty and loyalty. And, therefore, I do not say that the court must flee; I only say it must leave Paris, for Paris is the furnace of the revolution! The royal court must withdraw, as soon as possible, to the very boundaries of France! It must there gather an army, and put it under the command of some faithful general, and with this army march against the riotous capital; and I will be there to smooth the way and open the gates!"

"I thank you, count, I thank you!" cried Marie Antoinette, rising from her seat. "Now, I doubt no more about the future, for my own thoughts coincide with those of our greatest statesmen! I, too, am convinced the court ought to leave Paris—that it must withdraw, in order to escape new humiliations, and that it ought to return only in the splendor of its power, and with an army to put the rebels to flight, and breathe courage into the timid and faithful. Oh! you must tell the king all this; you must show him that our removal from Paris is not only a means of salvation to the crown, but to the people as well. Your words will convince the noblest and best of monarchs; he will follow your counsels, and, thanks to you, not we alone, but the monarchy will be saved! No, go to the work, count! Be active in our behalf; bring your unbounded influence, in favor of the king and queen, to bear upon all spirits, and be sure that we shall be grateful to you so long as we live. Farewell, and remember that my eye will follow all your steps, and that my ears will hear every word which Mirabeau shall speak in the National Assembly."

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* Mirabeau's own words.—See "Mémoires du Comte de Mirabeau," vol iii., p. 290.

Mirabeau bowed respectfully. "Madame," said he, "when your exalted mother condescended to favor one of her subjects with an audience, she never dismissed him without permitting the favored one respectfully to kiss her hand."

"It is true," replied Marie Antoinette, with a pleasant smile, "and in this, at least, I can follow the example of my great mother!"

And, with inimitable grace, the queen extended her hand to him. Mirabeau, enraptured, beside himself at this display of courtesy and favor, dropped upon his knee and pressed his lips to the delicate, white hand of the queen.

"Madame," cried he, with warmth, "this kiss saves the monarchy!" *

"If you have spoken the truth, sir," said the queen, with a sigh, rising and dismissing him, with a gentle inclination of her head.

With excited and radiant looks, Mirabeau returned to his nephew, who was waiting for him at the gate of the park.

"Oh!" said he, with a breath of relief, laying his hand upon the shoulder of Saillant, "what have I not heard and seen! She is very great, very noble, and very unhappy, Victor! But," cried he, with a loud, earnest voice, "I will save her—I will save her!" †

Mirabeau was in earnest in this purpose; and not because he had been bought over, but because he had been won—carried away with the noble aspect of the queen—did he become from this time a zealous defender of the monarchy, an eloquent advocate in behalf of Marie Antoinette. But he was not now able to restrain the dashing

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* Mirabeau's own words.—See "Mémoires de Mirabeau," vol iv., p. 208.

† "Marie Antoinette et sa Famille," p 480.

waves of revolution; he could not even save himself from being engulfed in these raging waves.

Mirabeau knew it well, and made no secret of the peril of his position. On the day when, before the division, he spoke in defence of the monarchy and the royal prerogative, and undertook to decide the question of peace or war—on that day he first announced himself openly for the king, and raised a storm of excitement and disgust in the National Assembly. Still he spoke right bravely in behalf of the crown; and while doing so, he cried, "I know well that it is only a single step from the capitol to the Tarpeian rock!"

Step after step! And these successive steps Mirabeau was soon to take. Pétion had not in vain characterized Mirabeau as the most dangerous enemy of the republic. Marat had not asserted, without knowing what he said, that Mirabeau must let all his aristocratic blood flow from his veins, or bleed to death altogether! Not with impunity could Mirabeau encounter the rage of parties, and fling down the gauntlet before them, saying, at the same moment, "He would defend the monarchy against all attacks, from what side soever, and from what part soever of the kingdom they might come."

The leaders of the republican factions knew very well how to estimate the power of Mirabeau; they knew very well that Mirabeau was able to fit together the fragments of the crown which he had helped to break. And, to prevent his doing this, they knew that he must be buried beneath these fragments.

Soon after his interview with the queen—after his dissenting speech in behalf of the prerogative of the king—Mirabeau began to fail in health. His enemies said that it was only the result of over-exertion, and a cold which he had brought on by drinking a glass of cold water during a speech in the National Assembly. His friends whispered about a deadly poison which had been mingled with this glass of water, in order to rid themselves of this powerful and dangerous opponent.

Mirabeau believed this; and the increasing torpor of his limbs, the pains which he felt in his bowels, appeared to him to be the sure indications of poison given him by his enemies.

The lion, who had been willing to crouch at the foot of the throne for the purpose of guarding it, was now nothing but a poor, sick man, whose voice was lost, and whose power was extinguished. For a season he sought to contend against the malady which was lurking in his body; but one day, in the midst of a speech which he was making in behalf of the queen, he sank in a fainting-fit, and was carried unconsciously to his dwelling. After long efforts on the part of his physician, the celebrated Cabanis, Mirabeau opened his eyes. Consciousness was restored, but with it a fixed premonition of his approaching death.

"I am dying!" he said, softly. "I am bearing in my heart the funeral crape of the monarchy. These raging partisans want to pluck it out, deride it, and fasten it to their own foreheads. And this compels them to break my heart, and this they have done!" *

Yes, they had broken it—this great strong heart, in which the funeral crape of monarchy lay. At first the physician and his friends hoped that it might be possible to overcome his malady, but Mirabeau was not flattered by any such hope; he felt that the pains which were racking his body would end only with death.

After one especially painful and distressing night, Mirabeau had his physician Cabanis and his friend Count de la Marck summoned to his bed, and extended to them both his hands. "My friends," he said to them with gentle voice and with peaceful face, "my friends, I am going to die to-day. When one has been brought to that pass, there is only one thing that remains to be done: to be perfumed, tastefully dressed, and surrounded with flowers, so as to fall agreeably into that last sleep from which there is no waking. So, call my servants! I must be shaved, dressed, and nicely arrayed. The window must be opened, that the warm air may stream in, and then flowers must be brought. I want to die in the sunshine and flowers." †

His friends did not venture to oppose his last wish. The gladiator wanted to make his last toilet and be elaborately arrayed in order to fall in the arena of life as a hero falls, and even in death to excite the wonder and the applause of the public.

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* Mirabeau's own words.—See "Mémoires sur Mirabeau," vol. iv., p. 296.

† Mirabeau's words.—See "Mémoires sur Mirabeau," vol. iv., p. 296.

All Paris was in this last scene the public of this gladiator; all Paris had, in these last days of his battle for life, only one thought, "How is it with Mirabeau? Will he compel the dreadful enemy Death to retire from before him, or will he fall as the prey of Death?" This question was written on all faces, repeated in all houses and in all hearts. Every one wanted to receive an answer from that still house, with its closely-drawn curtains, where Mirabeau lived. All the streets which led thither were, during the last three days before his death, filled with a dense mass of men, and no carriage was permitted to drive through the neighborhood, lest it should disturb Mirabeau. The theatres were closed, and, without any consultation together, the merchants shut their stores as they do on great days of national fasting or thanksgiving.

On the morning of the fourth day, before life had begun to move in the streets of Paris, and before the houses were opened, a cry was heard in the great highways of the city, ringing up into all the houses, and entering all the agitated hearts that heard it: "Flowers, bring flowers! Mirabeau wants flowers! Bring roses and violets for Mirabeau! Mirabeau wants to die amid flowers!"

This cry awoke slumbering Paris the 2d of April, 1791, and, as it resounded through the streets, windows and doors opened, and hundreds, thousands of men hastened from all directions toward Mirabeau's house, carrying nosegays, bouquets, whole baskets of flowers. One seemed to be transferred from cool, frosty spring weather to the warm, fragrant days of summer; all the greenhouses, all the chambers poured out their floral treasures to prepare one last summer day for the dying tribune of the people. His whole house was filled with flowers and with fragrance. The hall, the staircase, the antechamber, and the drawing-room were overflowing with flowers; and there in the middle of the drawing-room lay Mirabeau upon a lounge, carefully dressed, shaved and powdered, as if for a royal festival. The most beautiful of the flowers, the fairest exotics surrounded his couch, and bent their variegated petals down to the pale, death-stricken gladiator, who still had power to summon a smile to his lips, and with one last look of affection to bid farewell to his weeping friends—farewell to the flowers and the sunlight!

On his lofty brow, on his smiling lips, there was written, after Death had claimed him, after the gladiator had fallen, "The dying one greets you!"

The day of his death was the day of his last triumph; and the flowers that all Paris sent to him, were to Mirabeau the parting word of love and admiration!

Four times daily the king had sent to inquire after Mirabeau's welfare, and when at noon, on the 2d of April, Count de la Marck brought the tidings of his death, the king turned pale. "Disaster is hovering over us," he said, sadly, "Death too arrays himself on the side of our enemies!"

Marie Antoinette was also very deeply moved by the tidings. "He wanted to save us, and therefore must die! The burden was too heavy, the pillar has broken under the weight; the temple will plunge down and bury us beneath its ruins, if we do not hasten to save ourselves! Mirabeau's bequest was his counsel to speedy and secret flight! We must follow his advice, we must remove from Paris. May the spirit of Mirabeau enlighten the heart of the king, that he may be willing to do what is necessary,—that he may be willing to leave Paris!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

REVOLUTION IN THE THEATRE.

ALL Paris was again in commotion, fear, and uproar. The furies of the revolution, the market-women, went howling again through the streets on the 20th of June, 1791, uttering their horrid curses upon the king and the Austrian woman, and hurling their savage words and dirty songs against Madame Veto, against *la chienne d'Autriche.*

Around the Tuileries stood in immense masses the corps of the National Guard, with grave and threatening mien, and with difficulty holding back the people, who were filling the whole broad square in front of the palace, and who could only with great effort be prevented from breaking through those strong cordons of guards who held both ends of the street leading to the Tuileries, and kept at least the middle of the way free and open.

It was a way for the king, the queen, and the royal family, who were to reënter Paris that day. Lafayette had, at the order of the National Assembly, gone with some regiments of the guard to Varennes, to conduct the king back to the capital. Thousands upon thousands had hurried out after him in order to observe this return of the representatives of monarchy, and to take part in this funeral procession!

For it was a funeral of the monarchy which was celebrated that day; and this great, heavy carriage, surrounded by soldiers, and the ribald, mocking populace—this great carriage, which now drove along the streets leading to the Tuileries, amid the thunder of cannon, and the peals of bells from towers, was the funeral car of monarchy.

The king, the queen, the royal children, the sister of the king, Madame Tourzel, and the two deputies whom the National Assembly had sent to Varennes to accompany the royal family, Pétion and Barnave, were in this carriage.

They had tried to follow the advice of the dying Mirabeau, and to save themselves from the revolution. That was the offence of this king and this queen, who were now brought back in triumph to the Tuileries, the palace of kings, and from that time a royal prison.

Tri-colored banners waved from all roofs and from all windows; placards were displayed everywhere, bearing in immense letters the words: "Whoever applauds the king shall be scourged; whover insults him shall be hanged!"

They had wished to escape, these unhappy ones, who are now brought back from Varennes, where they were identified and detained. Now they were returning, no longer the masters, but the prisoners of the French nation! The National Assembly had passed a decree, whose first article was: "The king is temporarily set aside from the functions of royalty;" and whose second and third articles were, "that so soon as the king and his family shall be brought back to the Tuileries, a provisional watch shall be set over him, as well as over the queen and the dauphin, which, under the command of the general-in-chief of the National Guard of Paris, shall be responsible for their safety and for their detention."

The king and the queen returned to Paris as prisoners, and Lafayette was their jailer. The master of France, the many-headed King of the French nation, was the National Assembly.

Sad, dreadful days of humiliation, of resignation, of perils and anxieties, now followed for the royal family, the prisoners of the Tuileries, who were watched day and night by spying eyes, and whose doors must remain open day and night, in order that officers on guard might look without hinderance into the apartments in which the prisoners of the French nation lived.

During the first week after the sad return, the spirit of the queen seemed to be broken, her energies to be impaired forever. She had no more hope, no more fear; she threw out no new plans for escaping, she neither worked nor wrote. She only sat still and sad for hours, and before her eyes passed the dreadful pictures of the time just gone by, presenting themselves with dreadful vividness, and in the recollection anguishing her spirit. She recalled the excitement and anxiety of the day which preceded the flight. She saw herself, as with trembling hands she put on the garments of one of her waiting-maids, and then disguised the dauphin in girl's clothes; she heard the boy asking anew, with his pleasant smile: "Are we going to play theatre, mamma queen?" Then she saw herself on the street alone, waiting without any protection or company for the carriage which was to take her up, after taking up at another place the king and the two children. She recalled the drive in the dark night, the heat in the close, heavy carriage, the dreadful alarm when suddenly, after a twelve hours' drive, the carriage broke, and all dismounted to climb the hill to the village which lay before them, and where they had to wait till the carriage could be repaired. Then the journey on, the delay in Varennes, the cry, "They are recognized." Then the confusion, the march, the anguish of the hours following, and finally that last hour of hope when, in the poor chamber of the shopkeeper Sauce, his wife standing near the bed on which the little prince slept, she conjured his wife to save the king and find him a hiding-place. Then she heard again before her ears the woman's hard voice answering her: "Madame, it cannot be; I love my husband, too, and I also have children, but my husband were lost if I saved yours." Then she heard afresh the cries, the march; saw the arrival of the Paris regiments and the deputies whom the National Assembly sent to conduct the royal refugees back to Paris. Then she recalled the drive back, crowded into the carriage with the deputies, and the ribald populace roaring around. As she thought of all these things, a shudder ran through the form of the unhappy queen, and tears streamed unrestrainedly from her eyes.

But gradually she gained her composure and spirit, and even the daily humiliation and trials which she encountered awakened in her the fire and defiance of her earlier days.

The king and the queen were, after their return from Varennes, the prisoners of their own people, and the Tuileries formed the prison in which with never-sleeping cruelty the people watched their royal captives.

The chiefs of the battalions constituting the National Guard took turns in sentry duty over the royal couple. They had received the rigid order to constantly watch the royal family, and not to leave them for a moment alone. Even the sleeping-room of the queen was not closed to the espionage of the guards; the door to the drawing-room close by had always to be open, and in this drawing-room was the officer of the guard. Even in the night, while the queen lay in her bed, this door remained open, and the officer, sitting in an arm-chair directly opposite to the door, kept his eyes directed to the bed in which the queen sought to sleep, and wrestled with the pains and fear which she was too proud to show to her persecutors. The queen had stooped to make but one request; she had asked that at least in the morning, when she arose and dressed, she might close the doors of her sleeping-room, and they had been magnanimous enough to comply with her wish.*

But Queen Marie Antoinette had met all these humiliations, these disenchantments, and trials, full of hope of a change in her fortune. Her proud soul was still unbroken, her belief in the victory of monarchy under the favor of God animated her heart with a last ray of hope, and sustained her amid all her misfortune. She still would contend with her enemies for the love of this people, of whom she hoped that, led astray by Jacobins and agitators, they would at last confess their error, respect the voice of their king and queen, and return to love and regretfulness. And Marie Antoinette would sustain herself in view of the great day when the people's love should be given back; she would seek to bring that day back, and reconcile the people to the throne. On this account she would show the people that she cherished no fear of them; that she would intrust herself with perfect confidence to them, and greet them with her smiles and all the favor of former days. She would make one more attempt to regain her old popularity, and reawaken in their cold hearts the love which the people had once displayed to her by their loud acclamations. She found power in herself to let her tears flow, not visibly, but within her heart; to disguise with her smile the pain of her soul, and so she resolved to wear a cheerful and pleasant face, and appear again publicly in the theatre, as well as in open carriage-drives through the city.

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* "Histoire de Marie Antoinette," par Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, p. 261.

They were then giving in the great opera-house Gluck's "Alceste," the favorite opera of the queen—the opera in which a few years before she had received so splendid a triumph; in which the public loudly encored, "*Chantons, célébrons notre reine!*" which the choir had sung upon the stage, and, standing with faces turned toward the royal box, had mingled their voices with those of the singers, and repeated in a general chorus, "*Chantons, célébrons notre reine!*"

"I will try whether the public remembers that evening," said Marie Antoinette, with a faint smile, to Mademoiselle de Bugois, the only lady who had been permitted to remain with her; "I will go this evening to the opera; the public shall at least see that I intrust myself with confidence to it, and that I have not changed, however much may have been changed around."

Mademoiselle de Bugois looked with deep sadness at the pale face of the queen, that would show the public that she had not altered, and upon which, once so fair and bright, grief had recorded its ineradicable characters, and almost extinguished its old beauty. Deeply moved, the waiting-lady turned away in order not to let the tears be seen which, against her will, streamed from her eyes.

But Marie Antoinette had seen them nevertheless. With a sad smile she laid her hand upon the shoulder of the lady-in-waiting. "Ah!" said she, mildly, "do not conceal your tears. You are much happier than I, for you can shed tears; mine have been flowing almost two years in silence, and I have had to swallow them! *

"But I will not weep this evening," she continued, "I will meet these Parisians at least in composure. Yes, I will do more, I will try to smile to them. They hate me now, but perhaps they will remember then that once they truly loved me. There is a trace of magnanimity in the people, and my confidence will perhaps touch it. Be quick, and make my toilet. I will be fair to-day. I will adorn myself for the Parisians. They will not be my enemies alone who will be at the theatre; some of my friends will be there, and they at least will be glad to see me. Quick, mademoiselle, let us begin my toilet."

And with a liveliness and a zeal which, in her threatened situation, had something touching in it, Marie Antoinette arrayed herself for the public, for the good Parisians.

The news that the queen was to appear that evening at the theatre had quickly run through all Paris; the officer on duty told it at his relief to some of the guards, they to those whom they met, and it spread like wildfire. It was therefore very natural that, long before the curtain was raised, the great opera-house was completely filled, parquette, boxes, and parterre, with a passionately-excited throng. The friends of the queen went in order to give her a long-looked-for triumph; her enemies—and these the poor queen had in overwhelming numbers—to fling their hate, their malice, their scorn, into the face of Marie Antoinette.

And enemies of the queen had taken places for themselves in every part of the great house. They even sat in the boxes of the first rank, on those velvet-cushioned chairs which had formerly been occupied exclusively by the enthusiastic admirers of the court, the ladies and gentlemen of the aristocracy. But now the aristocracy did not dare to sit there. The most of them, friends of the queen, had fled, giving way before her enemies and persecutors; and in the boxes where they once sat, now were the chief

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* Marie Antoinette's own words.—See Goncourt, p. 264.

members of the National Assembly, together with the leading orators of the clubs, and the societies of Jacobins.

To the box above, where the people had once been accustomed to see Princess Lamballe, the eyes of the public were directed again and again. Marie Antoinette had been compelled to send away this last of her friends to London, to have a conference with Pitt. Instead of the fair locks of the princess, was now to be seen the head of a man, who, resting both arms on the velvet lining of the box, was gazing down with malicious looks into the surging masses of the parterre. This man was Marat, once the veterinary of the Count d'Artois, now the greatest and most formidable orator of the wild Jacobins.

He too had come to see the hated she-wolf, as he had lately called the queen in his "*Ami du Peuple*," and, to prepare for her a public insult, sat drunk with vanity in the splendid box of the Princess Lamballe; his friends and confidants were in the theatre, among them Santerre the brewer, and Simon the cobbler, often looking up at Marat, waiting for the promised motion which should be his signal for the great demonstration.

At length the time arrived for the opera to begin, and, alhough the queen had not come, the director of the orchestra did not venture to detain the audience even for a few minutes. He went to his place, took his baton, and gave the sign. The overture began, and all was silent, in parquette and parterre, as well as in the boxes. Every one seemed to be listening only to the music, equally full of sweetness and majesty—only to have ears for the noble rhythm with which Gluck begins his "Alceste."

Suddenly there arose a dull, suppressed sound in parquette, parterre, and boxes, and all heads which had before been directed toward the stage, were now turned backward toward the great royal box. No one paid any more attention to the music, no one noticed that the overture was ended and that the curtain was raised.

Amid the blast of trumpets, the noise of violins and clarionets, the public had heard the light noise of the opening doors, had noticed the entrance of the officers, and this sound had made the Parisians forget even their much-loved music.

There now appeared in the open box-door a woman's form. The queen, followed by Mademoiselle de Bugois, advanced slowly through the great box to the very front. All eyes were directed to her, all looks searched her pale, noble face.

Marie Antoinette felt this, and a smile flitted over her face like the evening glow of a summer's day. With this smile and a deep blush Marie Antoinette bowed and saluted the public.

A loud, unbounded cry of applause resounded through the vast room. In the parquette and in the boxes hundreds of spectators arose and hailed the queen with a loud, pealing "*Vive la reine!*" and clapped their hands like pleased children, and looked up to the queen with joyful, beaming countenances.

"Oh, my faith has not deceived!" whispered Marie Antoinette into the ear of her companion. "The good Parisians love me still; they, like me, remember past times, and the old loyalty is awaking in them."

And again she bowed her thanks right and left, and again the house broke out into loud applause.

A single, angry glance of Marat's little eyes, peering out from beneath the bushy brows, met the queen.

"Only wait," said Marat, rising from his seat and directing his glances at the parterre. There stood the giant Santerre, and not far from him Simon the cobbler, in the midst of a crowd of savage-looking, defiant fellows, who all looked at their leaders, while they, Santerre and Simon, directed their eyes up to the box of Marat.

The glance of the chief met that of his two friends. A scornful, savage expression swept over Marat's ash-colored, dirty face, and he nodded lightly to his allies. Santerre and Simon returned the nod, and they, turning to their companions, gave the signal by raising the right hand.

Suddenly the applause was overborne by loud whistling and shouting, derisive laughter, and wild curses.

"The civil war has begun!" cried Marat, rubbing his hands together with delight.

The royalists continued to applaud and to shout, "*Vive la reine!*" Their opponents tried to silence them by their hisses and whistling. Marat's face glowed with demoniacal pleasure. He turned to the boxes of the second tier, and nodded smilingly to the men who sat there.

At once they began to cry, "The chorus, the chorus, let them sing, '*Chantons, célébrons notre reine!*'"

"Very well," said Marat. "I am a good royalist, for I have trained the people to the cry."

"Sing, sing!" shouted the men to the performers on the stage—"sing the chorus, '*Chantons, célébrons notre reine!*'"

And in the boxes, parquette, everywhere was the cry, "Sing the chorus, '*Chantons, célébrons notre reine!*'"

"No," roared Santerre, "no, they shall not sing that!"

"No," cried Simon, "we will not hear the monkey-song!"

And hundreds of men in the parterre and the upper rows of boxes echoed the cry, "No, we will not hear the monkey-song!"

"The thing works well!" said Marat. "I hold my people by a thread, and make them gesticulate and spring up and down, like the concealed man in a Punch and Judy show."

The noise went on; the royalists would not cease their applause and their calls for the chorus, "*Chantons, célébrons notre reine!*" The enemies of the queen did not cease hissing and shouting, "We do not want to hear any thing about the queen; we will not hear the monkey-song!"

"Oh, would I had never come here!" whispered the queen, with tearful eyes, as she sank back in her arm-chair, and hid her face in her handkerchief.

Perhaps because the real royalists saw the agitation of the queen, and out of compassion for her were willing to give up the controversy—perhaps Marat had given a sign to the false royalists that they had had enough of shouting and confusion—at all events the cry "*Vive la reine*" and the call for the chorus died away suddenly, the applause ceased, and as the enemies of the queen had now no opposition to encounter, nothing was left to them but to be silent too.

"The first little skirmish is over!" said Marat, resting his bristly head on the back of his velvet arm-chair. "Now we will listen to the music a little, and look at the pretty theatre girls."

And in fact the opera had now begun; the director of the orchestra had taken advantage of the return of quiet to give a sign to the singers on the stage to begin at once, and with fortunate presence of mind his command was obeyed.

The public, wearied it may be with the shouting and noise, remained silent, and seemed to give its attention exclusively to the stage, the development of the plot, and the noble music.

Marie Antoinette breathed freely again; her pale cheeks began to have color once more, her eyes were again bright, and she seemed transported beyond the sore battles and dreadful discords of her life; she listened respectfully to the sweet melodies, and the grand harmonies of the teacher of her youth, the great Gluck. Leaning back in her armchair, she allowed the music to flow into her soul, and the recollection of past days awoke afresh in her mind. She dreamed of the days of her childhood: she saw herself again in Schönbrunn; she saw her teacher Gluck enter the blue music-room, in which she with her sisters used to wait for him; she saw the glowing countenance of her mother, the great Maria Theresa, entering her room, in order to give Gluck a proof of her high regard, and to announce to him herself that Marie Antoinette had betrothed herself to the Dauphin of France, and that she would soon bid her teacher farewell, in order to enter upon her new and brilliant career.

A low hum in the theatre awakened the queen from her reveries; she raised herself up and leaned forward, to see what was going on. Her glance, which was directed to the stage, fell upon the singer Clairval, who was just then beginning to give, with his wonderfully full and flexible voice, the great aria in which the friend comes to console the grief-burdened, weeping Queen Alceste, and to dry her tears by assuring her of the love of her faithful adherents.

Clairval had advanced in the aria to that celebrated passage which had given to Marie Antoinette a half year before her last great triumph. It ran:

"Reine infortunée, ah! que ton cœur
Ne soit plus navré de douleur!
Il vous reste encore des amis!"

But scarcely had Clairval begun the first strophe when the thundering voice of Santerre called, "None of that, we will not hear the air!"

"No, we will not hear the air!" shouted hundreds and hundreds of voices.

"Poor Gluck," whispered Marie Antoinette, with tears in her eyes, "because they hate me, they will not even hear your music!"

"Sing it, sing it!" shouted hundreds and hundreds of voices from all parts of the house.

"No, do not sing it!" roared the others; "we will not hear the air."

And suddenly, above the cries of the contestants, rose a loud, yelling voice:

"I forbid the singer Clairval ever again singing this air. I forbid it in the name of the people!"

It was Marat who spoke these words. Standing on the arm-chair of the Princess de Lamballe, and raising his long arms, and directing them threateningly toward the stage, he turned his face, aglow with hate and evil, toward the queen.

Marie Antoinette, who had turned her head in alarm in the direction whence the voice proceeded, met with her searching looks the eyes of Marat, which were fixed upon her with an expression equally stern and contemptuous.

She shrank back, and, as if in deadly pain, put her hand to her heart.

"O God!" she whispered to herself, "that is no man, that is an infernal demon, who has risen there to take the place of my dear, sweet Lamballe. Ah, the good spirit is gone, and the demon takes its place—the demon which will destroy us all!"

"Long live Marat!" roared Santerre, and his comrades. "Long live Marat, the great friend of the people, the true patriot!"

Marat bowed on all sides, stepped down from the easy-chair, and seated himself comfortably in it.

Clairval had stopped in the air; pale, confused, and terrified, he had withdrawn, and the director whispered to the orchestra and the singers to begin the next number.

The opera went on, and the public again appeared to give itself during some scenes to the enjoyment of the music. But soon this short quiet was to be disturbed again. One of the singers, Madame Dugazont, a zealous royalist, wanted to give the queen a little triumph, and show her that, although Clairval had been silenced, the love and veneration of Dugazont were still alive and ready to display themselves.

Singing as the attendant of Alceste, Dugazont had these words to give in her part: "*Ah! comme j'aime la reine, comme j'aime ma maîtresse!*"

She advanced close to the footlights, and turning her looks toward the royal box, and bowing low, sang the words: "*Comme j'aime la reine, comme j'aime ma maîtresse!*"

And now, as if this had been the battle-cry of a new contest, a fearful din, a raging torrent of sound began through the whole house. At first it was a mixed and confused mass of cries, roars, hisses, and applause. Now and then single voices could be heard above the horrid chaos of sounds. "We want no queen!" shouted some. "We want no mistress!" roared others; and mingled with those was the contrary cry, "Long live the queen! Long live our mistress!"

"Hi!" said Marat, full of delight, twisting his bony form up into all kinds of knots—"hi! this is the way they shout in hell. Satan himself would like this!"

More and more horrible, more and more wild became the cries of the rival partisans. Already embittered and exasperated faces were confronting each other, and here and there clinched fists were seen, threatening to bring a shouting neighbor to silence by the use of violence.

The queen, trembling in every limb, had let her head fall powerlessly on her breast, in order that no one might see the tears which ran from her eyes over her death-like cheeks.

"O God," whispered she, "we are lost, hopelessly lost, for not merely our enemies injure us, and bring us into danger, but our friends still more. Why must that woman turn to me and direct her words to me? She wanted to give me a triumph, and yet she has brought me a new humiliation." Suddenly she shrank back and raised her head. She had caught the first tones of that sharp, mocking voice, which had already pierced her heart, the voice of that evil demon who now occupied the place of the good Princess Lamballe.

The voice cried: "The people of Paris are right. We want no queen! And more than all other things, no mistress! Only slaves acknowledge masters over them. If the Dugazont ventures to sing again, 'I love my queen, I love my mistress,' she will be punished as slaves are punished—that is, she will be flogged!"

"Bravo, Marat, bravo!" roared Santerre, with his savage rabble. "Bravo, Marat, bravo!" cried his friends in the boxes; "she shall be flogged!"

Marat bowed on all sides, and turned his eyes, gleaming with scorn and hatred, toward the royal box, and menaced it with his clinched fists.

"But not alone shall the singer be flogged," cried he, with a voice louder and sharper than before—"no, not alone shall the singer be flogged, but greater punishment have they deserved who urge on to such deeds. If the Austrian woman comes here again to turn the heads of sympathizing souls with her martyr looks, if she undertakes again to move us with her tears and her face, we will serve her as she deserves, we will go whip in hand into her box!" *

The queen rose from her chair like an exasperated lioness, and advanced to the front of the box. Standing erect, with flaming looks of anger, with cheeks like purple, she confronted them there—the true heir of the Cæsars, the courageous daughter of Maria Theresa—and had already opened her lips to speak and overwhelm the traitor with her wrath, when another voice was heard giving answer to Marat.

It cried: "Be silent, Marat, be silent. Whoever dares to insult a woman, be she queen or beggar, dishonors himself, his mother, his wife, and his daughter. I call on you all, I call on the whole public, to take the part of a defenceless woman, whom Marat ventures to mortally insult. You all have mothers and wives; you may, perhaps, some day have daughters. Defend the honor of woman! Do

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* Goncourt's "Histoire de Marie Antoinette," p. 265.

not permit it to be degraded in your presence. Marat has insulted a woman; we owe her satisfaction for it. Join with me in the cry, 'Long live the queen! Long live Marie Antoinette!'"

And the public, carried away with the enthusiasm of this young, handsome man, who had risen in his box, and whose slender, proud figure towered above all—the public broke into one united stirring cry: "Long live the queen! Long live Marie Antoinette!"

Marat, trembling with rage, his countenance suffused with a livid paleness, sank back in his chair.

"I knew very well that Barnave was a traitor," he whispered. "I shall remember this moment, and Barnave shall one day atone for it with his head."

"Barnave, it is Barnave," whispered the queen to herself. "He has rescued me from great danger, for I was on the point of being carried away by my wrath, and answering the monster there as he deserves."

"Long live the queen! Long live Marie Antoinette!" shouted the public.

Marie Antoinette bowed and greeted the audience on all sides with a sad smile, but not one look did she cast to the box where Barnave sat, with not one smile did she thank him for the service he had done her. For the queen knew well that her favor brought misfortune to those who shared it; that he on whom she bestowed a smile was the object of the people's suspicion.

The public continued to shout her name, but the queen felt herself exhausted, and drawing back from the front of the box, she beckoned to her companion. "Come," she whispered, "let us go while the public are calling 'Long live Marie Antoinette!' Who knows whether they will not be shouting in another minute, 'Away with the queen! we want no queen!' It pains my ear so to hear that, so let us go."

And while the public were yet crying, Marie Antoinette left the box and passed out into the corridor, followed by Mademoiselle Bugois and the two officers in attendance.

But the corridor which the queen had to pass, the staircase which she had to descend in order to reach her carriage, were both occupied by a dense throng. With the swiftness of the wind the news had spread through Paris that the queen was going to visit the opera that evening, and that her visit would not take place without witnessing some extraordinary outbreak.

The royalists had hastened thither, to salute the queen, and at least to see her on the way. The curious, the idle, and the hostile-minded had come to see what should take place, and to shout as the majority might shout. The great opera-house had therefore not accommodated half who wanted to be present, and all those who had been refused admittance had taken their station on the stairway and the corridor, or before the main entrance. And it was natural that those who stood before the door should, by their merely being there, excite the curiosity of passers-by, so that these, too, stood still, to see what was going on, and all pressed forward to the staircase to see every thing and to hear every thing.

But the civil war which was raging within the theatre had given rise to battles outside as well; the same cries which had resounded within, pealed along the path of the queen. She could only advance slowly; closer and closer thronged the crowd, louder and louder roared around Marie Antoinette the various battle-cries of the parties, "Long live the queen!" "Long live the National Assembly! Down with the queen!"

Marie Antoinette appeared to hear neither the one nor the other of these cries. With proudly erected head, and calm, grave looks, she walked forward, untroubled about the crowd, which the National Guard before her could only break through by a recourse to threats and violence, in order to make a passage for the queen.

At last the difficult task was done; at last she had reached her carriage, and could rest upon its cushions, and, unobserved by spying looks, could give way to her grief and her tears. But alas! this consolation continued only for a short time. The carriage soon stopped; the Tuileries, that sad, silent prison of the royal family, was soon reached, and Marie Antoinette quickly dried her tears, and compelled herself to appear calm.

"Do not weep more, Bugois," she whispered. "We will not give our enemies the triumph of seeing that they have forced tears from us. Try to be cheerful, and tell no one of the insults of this evening."

The carriage door was opened, the queen dismounted, and, surrounded by National Guards and officers, returned to her apartments.

No one bade her welcome, no one received her as becomes a queen. A few of the servants only stood in the outer room, but Marie Antoinette had no looks for them. She had been compelled as a *constitutional* queen ought, to dismiss her own tried and faithful servants; her household had been reorganized, and she knew very well that these new menials were her enemies, and served as spies for the National Assembly. The queen therefore passed them without greeting, and entered her sitting-room.

But even here she was not alone; the door of the anteroom was open, and there sat the officer of the National Guard, whose duty of the day it was to watch her.

Marie Antoinette had no longer the right of being alone with her grief, no longer the right of being alone with her husband. The little corridor which ran from the apartments of the queen to those of the king, was always closed and guarded. When the king came to visit his wife, the guard came too and remained, hearing every word and standing at the door till the king retired. In like manner, both entrances to the apartments of the queen were always watched; for before the one sat an officer appointed by the National Assembly, and before the other a member of the National Guard stood as sentry.

With a deep sigh the queen entered her sleeping-room. The officer sat before the open door of the adjacent room, and looked sternly and coldly in. For an instant an expression of anger flitted over the face of the queen, and her lips quivered as though she wanted to speak a hasty word. But she suppressed it, and withdrew behind the great screen, in order to be disrobed by her two waiting-maids and be arrayed in her night-dress.

Then she dismissed the maids, and coming out from behind the screen, she said, loudly enough to be heard by the officer: "I am weary, I will sleep."

At once he arose, and turning to the two guards, who stood at the door of the anteroom, said:

"The queen is retiring, and the watch in the black corridor can withdraw. The National Assembly has given command to lighten the service of the National Guard, by withdrawing as much of the force as possible. As long as the queen is lying in bed, two eyes are enough to watch her, and they shall watch her well!"

The soldiers left the anteroom, and the officer returned to the entrance of the sleeping-room. He did not, however, sit down in the easy-chair before the door, but walked directly into the chamber of the queen.

Marie Antoinette trembled and reached out her hand for the bell which stood by her on the table.

"Be still, for God's sake, be still!" whispered the officer. "Make no noise, your majesty. Look at my face." And, kneeling before the queen, he raised his head and looked at her with an expression almost of supplication. "I am Toulan," he whispered, "the faithful servant of my queen. Will your majesty have the goodness to recall me? Here is a letter from my patroness, Madame de Campan, who speaks well for me. Will your majesty read it?"

The queen ran over the paper quickly and turned with a gentle smile to the officer, who was still kneeling before her, and who, in all her humiliation and misfortune, still paid her the homage due to majesty.

"Stand up, sir," she said, mildly. "The throne lies in dust, and my crown is so sadly broken, that it is no longer worth the trouble to kneel before it."

"Madame, I see two crowns upon your noble head," whispered Toulan—"the crown of the queen, and the crown of misfortune. To these two crowns I dedicate my service and my fidelity, and for them I am prepared to die. It is true, I can do but little for your majesty, but that little shall be faithfully done. Thanks to my bitter hatred of royalty, and my rampant Jacobinism, I have carried matters so far, that I have been put upon the list of officers to keep watch, and, therefore, once every week I shall keep guard before your majesty's sleeping-room."

"And will you do me the favor to so put your chair that I shall not see you—that during the night I may not always have the feeling of being watched?" asked the queen, in supplicant tones.

"No, your majesty," said Toulan, moved. "I will remain in my chair, but your majesty will prefer, perhaps, to turn the night into day, and remain up; as during my nights you will not be disturbed."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Marie Antoinette, joyfully.

"I mean, that, as during the day your majesty can never speak with the king without witnesses, we must call the night to our assistance, if you wish to speak confidentially to his majesty. Your majesty has heard, that during the night the watch is withdrawn from the corridor, and your majesty is free to leave your room and go to the chamber of the king."

A flash of joy passed over the countenance of the queen. "I thank you, sir—I thank you to-day as a wife; perhaps the day may come when I can thank you as a queen; I accept your magnanimous kindness. Yes, I will turn the night into day, and, thanks to you, I shall be able to spend several hours undisturbed with my husband and my children. And do you say that you shall be here quite often?"

"Yes, your majesty, I shall be here once every week at your majesty's order."

"Oh! I have lost the habit of ordering," said Marie Antoinette, with a pained look. "You see that the Queen of France is powerless, but she is not wholly unfortunate, for she has friends still. You belong to these friends, sir; and that we may both retain the memory of this day, I will always call you my faithful one."

No, the queen is not wholly unfortunate; she has friends who are ready, with her, to suffer; with her, if it must be, to die. The Polignacs are gone, but Princess Lamballe, whom the queen had sent to London, to negotiate with Pitt, has returned, in spite of the warnings and pleadings of the queen. Marie Antoinette, when she learned that the princess was on the point of leaving England, had written to her: "Do not come back at a moment so critical. You would have to weep too much for us. I feel deeply, believe me, how good you are, and what a true friend you are. But, with all my love, I enjoin you not to come here. Believe me, my tender friendship for you will cease only with death."

The warning of her royal friend had, meanwhile, not restrained Princess Lamballe from doing what friendship commanded. She had returned to France, and Marie Antoinette had, at least, the comfort of having a tender friend at her side.

No, the queen was not wholly unfortunate. Besides this friend, she had her children, too—her sweet, blooming little daughter, and the dauphin, the pride and joy of her heart.

The dauphin had no suspicion of the woes and misfortunes which were threatening them. Like flowers that grow luxuriantly and blossom upon graves, so grew and blossomed this beautiful boy in the Tuileries, which was nothing more than the grave of the old kingly glory.

But the dauphin was like sunshine in this dark, sad palace, and Marie Antoinette's countenance lightened when her eye fell upon her son, looking up to her with his tender, beaming face. From the fresh, merry smile of her darling, she herself learned to smile again and be happy.

Gradually, after the first rage of the people was appeased, the chains with which she was bound were relaxed. The royal family was at least permitted to leave the close, hot rooms, and go down into the gardens, although still watched and accompanied by the National Guard. They were permitted to close the doors of their rooms again, although armed sentries still stood before them.

There were even some weeks and months in this year 1791, when it appeared as if the exasperated spirits would be pacified, and the throne be reëstablished with a portion of its old dignity. The king had, in a certain manner, received forgiveness from the National Assembly, while accepting the constitution and swearing—as indeed he could but swear, all power having been taken from him, and he being a mere lay-figure—that would control all his actions, and govern according to the expressed will of the National Assembly.

But the king, in order to make peace with his people, had even made this sacrifice, and accepted the constitution. The people seemed grateful to him for this, and appeared to be willing to return to more friendly relations. The queen was no longer insulted with contemptuous cries when she appeared in the garden of the Tuileries, or in the Bois de Boulogne, and it even began to be the fashion to speak about the dauphin as a miracle of loveliness and beauty, and to go to the Tuileries to see him working in his garden.

This garden of the dauphin was in the immediate neighborhood of the palace, at the end of the terrace on the river-side; it was surrounded with a high wire fence, and close by stood the little pavilion where dwelt Abbé Davout, the teacher of the dauphin. The dauphin had had in Versailles a little garden of his own, which he himself worked, planted, and digged, and from whose flowers he picked a bouquet every morning, to bring it with beaming countenance to his mamma queen.

For this painfully-missed garden of Versailles, the little garden on the terrace had to compensate. The child was delighted with it; and every morning, when his study-hours were over, the dauphin hastened to his little *parterre*, to dig and to water his flowers. The garden has, since that day, much changed; it is enlarged, laid out on a different plan, and surrounded with a higher fence, but it still remains the garden of the Dauphin Louis Charles, the same garden that Napoleon subsequently gave to the little King of Rome; the same that Charles X. gave to the Duke de Bordeaux, and that Louis Philippe gave to the Count de Paris. How many recollections cluster around this little bit of earth, which has always been prematurely left by its young possessors! One died in prison scarcely ten years old; another, hurried away by the tempest, still younger, into a foreign land, only lived to hear the name of his father, and see his dagger before he died. The third and fourth were hurled out by the storm-wind like the first two, and still wear the mantle of exile in Austria and England. And many as are the tears with which these children regard their own fate, there must be many which they must bestow upon the fate of their fathers. One died upon the scaffold, another from the knife of an assassin, a third from a fall upon the pavement of a highway; and the last, the greatest of them all, was bound, like Prometheus, to a rock, and fed on bitter recollections till he met his death.

This little garden, on the river-side terrace of the Tuileries park, which has come to have a world-wide interest, was then the Eldorado of the little Dauphin of France; and to see him behind the fence was the delight of the Parisians who used to visit there, and long for the moment when the glance of his blue eye fell upon them, and for some days and months had again become enthusiastic royalists.

When the prince went into his little garden, he was usually accompanied by a detachment of the National Guard, who were on duty in the Tuileries; and the dauphin, who was now receiving instruction in the use of weapons, generally wore himself the uniform of a member of the National Guard. The Parisians were delighted with this little guard of six years. His picture hung in all stores, it was painted on fans and rings, and it was the fashion, among the most elegant ladies of the Faubourg St. Germain, and among the market-women as well, to decorate themselves with the likeness of the dauphin. How his brow beamed, how his eye brightened, when, accompanied by his escort, of which he was proud, he entered his garden! When the retinue was not large, the prince took his place in the ranks. One day, when all the National Guards on duty were very desirous of accompanying him, several of them were compelled to stand outside of the garden. "Pardon me, gentlemen," said the dauphin; "it is a great pity that my garden is so small that it deprives me of the pleasure of receiving you all." Then he hastened to give flowers to every one who was near the fence, and received their thanks with great pleasure.

The enthusiasm for the dauphin was so great, that the boys of Paris envied their elders the honor of being in his service, and longed to become soldiers, that they might be in his retinue. There was, in fact, a regiment of boys formed, which took the name of the Dauphin's Regiment. The citizens of Paris were anxious to enroll the names of their sons in the lists of this regiment, and to pay the expenses of an equipment. And when this miniature regiment was formed, with the king's permission, it marched to the Tuileries, in order to parade before the dauphin. The prince was delighted with the little regiment, and invited its officers to visit his garden, that they might see his flowers, his finest treasures. 'Would you do us the pleasure to be the colonel of our regiment?" one of the officers asked the dauphin.

"Oh! certainly," he answered.

"Then you must give up getting flowers and bouquets for your mamma!" said one of the boys.

"Oh!" answered the dauphin, with a smile, "that will not hinder my taking care of my flowers. Many of these gentlemen have little gardens, too, as they have told me. Very well, they can follow the example of their colonel, and love the queen, and then mamma will receive whole regiments of flowers every day."

The majority of this regiment consisted, at the outset, of children of the highest ranks of society, and it was therefore natural that they, practiced in the most finished courtesy, should pay some deference to their young colonel. But they were expressly forbidden showing any thing of this feeling toward their comrade. "For," said the king, "I want him to have companions who will stimulate his ambition; but I do not want him to have flatterers, who shall lead him to live to himself alone." Soon the number of little soldiers increased, for every family longed for the honor of having its sons in the regiment of the royal dauphin. The people used always to throng in great masses when this regiment went through its exercises in the Place de la Carrousel. It was a miniature representation of the French guards, with their three-cornered hats and white jackets; and nothing could be more charming than this regiment of blooming boys in their tasteful uniforms, and their little chief, the dauphin, looking at his regiment with beaming eyes and smiling lips.

The enthusiasm of the little soldiers of the Royal Dauphin Regiment for their colonel was so great, that they longed to give him a proof of their love. One day the officers of the regiment came into the Tuileries and begged the king's permission to make a present to the dauphin, in the name of the whole regiment. The king gladly acceded to their request, and he himself conducted the little officers into the reception-room, where was the dauphin, standing at the side of his mother.

The little colonel hastened to greet them. "Welcome, my comrades, welcome!" cried he, extending his hand to them. "My mamma queen tells me that you have brought me something which will give me pleasure. But it gives me pleasure to see you, and nothing more is needed."

"But, colonel, you will not refuse our present?"

"Oh, certainly not, for my papa king says that a colonel is not forbidden taking a gift from his regiment. What is it?"

"Colonel, we bring you a set of dominoes," said a little officer, named Palloy, who was the speaker of the delegation—"a set of dominoes entirely made out of the ruins of the Bastile."

And taking the wrapper from the white marble box, bound with gold, he extended it to the dauphin, and repeated with a solemn face the following lines:

"Those gloomy walls that once awoke our fear
Are changed into the toy we offer here:
And when with joyful face the gift you view,
Think what the people's mighty love can do." *

Poor little dauphin! Even when they wanted to do him homage, they were threatening him; and the present which affection offered to the royal child was at the same time a bequest of Revolution, which even then lifted her warning finger, and pointed at the past, when the hate of the people destroyed those "gloomy walls," which had been erected by kingly power.

In his innocence and childish simplicity, the dauphin saw nothing of the sting which, unknown even to the givers, lurked within this gift. He enjoyed like a child the beautiful present, and listened with eagerness while the manner of playing the game was described to him. All the stones were taken from the mantel of black marble in the reception-room of Delaunay, the governor of the Bastile, who had been murdered by the people. On the back of each of these stones was a letter set in gold, and when the whole were arranged in regular order, they formed the sentence: "*Vive le Roi, vive la Reine, et M. le Dauphin.*"

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* "De ces affreux cachots, la terreur des Français,
Vous voyez les débris transformés en hochets;
Puissent-ils, en servant aux jeux de votre enfance,
Du peuple vous prouver l'amour et la puissance."

Beauchesne, "Louis XVII. Sa Vie, son Agonie," etc., vol. iv., p. 325.

The marble of the box was taken from the altar-slab in the chapel. In the middle was a golden relief, representing a face.

"That is my papa king," cried the dauphin, joyfully, looking at the representation.

"Yes," replied Palloy, the speaker of the little company, "every one of us bears him in his heart. And like the king, you will live for the happiness of all, and like him you will be the idol of France. We, who shall one day be French soldiers and citizens, bring to you, who will then be our commander-in-chief and king, our homage as the future supporters of the throne which is destined for you, and which the wisdom of your father has placed under the unshakable power of law. The gift which we offer you is but small, but each one of us adds his heart to it." *

"And I give all of you my heart in return for it," cried the dauphin, with a joyful eagerness, "and I shall take great pains to be good, and to learn well, that I may be allowed to amuse myself with playing dominoes."

And the little fellow fixed his large, blue eyes upon the queen with a tender look, took her hand and pressed it to his lips.

"My dear mamma queen," he said, caressingly, "if I am real good, and study hard, we can both play dominoes together, can't we?"

A sad smile played around the lips of the queen, and no one saw the distrustful, timid look which she cast at the box, which to her was merely the memorial of a dreadful day.

"Yes, my child," she replied, mildly, "we will play dominoes often together, for you certainly will be good and industrious."

She controlled herself sufficiently to thank the boys with friendly words for the present which they had made to the dauphin, and then the deputation, accompanied by the king and the little prince, withdrew. But as soon as they had gone, the smile died away upon her lips, and with an expression of horror she pointed to the box.

"Take it away—oh, take it away!" she cried, to Madame de Tourzel. "It is a dreadful reminder of the past, a ter-

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* The very words of the little officer.

rible prophecy of the future. The stones of the Bastile, which the people destroyed, lie in this box! And the box itself, does it not look like a sarcophagus? And this sarcophagus bears the face of the king! Oh, the sorrow and woe to us unfortunate ones, who can not even receive gifts of love without seeing them obscured by recollections of hate, and who have no joys that have not bitter drops of grief mingled with them! The revolution sends us storm-birds, and we are to regard them as doves bringing us olive-branches. Believe me, I see into the future, and I discern the deluge which will drown us all!"

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER XIX.

JUNE 20 AND AUGUST 10, 1792.

MARIE ANTOINETTE was right. The revolution was sending its storm-birds to the Tuileries. They beat with their strong pinions against the windows of the palace; they pulled up and broke with their claws the flowers and plants of the garden, so that the royal family no longer ventured to enter it. But they had not yet entered the palace itself; and within its apartments, watched by the National Guard, the queen was at least safe from the insults of the populace.

No, not even there longer, for the storm-birds of the revolution beat against the windows, and these windows had once in a while to be opened to let in a little sunshine, and some fresh air. Marie Antoinette had long given up her walks in the garden of the Tuileries, for the rabble which stood behind the fence had insulted her so often with cries and acts, that she preferred to give up her exercise rather than to undergo such contemptuous treatment.

The king, too, in order to escape the scornful treatment of the populace, had relinquished his walks, and before long things came to such a pass that the dauphin was not allowed to visit his little garden. Marat, Santerre, Danton, and Robespierre, the great leaders of the people, had, by their threats against the royalists and their insurrectionary movements among the people, gained such power, that no one ventured to approach the garden of the prince to salute him, and show deference to the son of the king. The little regiment had been compelled, in order to escape the mockery and contempt, the hatred and persecution which followed them, to disband after a few months; and around the fence, when the dauphin appeared, there now stood none but men sent there by the revolutionists to deride the dauphin when he appeared, and shout their wild curses against the king and queen.

One day, when a crowd of savage women stood behind the fence, and were giving vent to their derision of the queen, the poor dauphin could not restrain his grief and indignation. With glowing cheeks and flaming eyes he turned upon the wild throng.

"You lie—oh, you lie!" he cried, with angry voice. "My mamma queen is not a wicked woman, and she does not hate the people. My mamma queen is so good, so good that——"

His tears choked his voice, and flowed in clear streams down over his cheeks. Ashamed, as it were, of this indication of weakness, the dauphin dashed out of the garden, and hastened so rapidly to the palace that the Abbé Davout could scarcely follow him. Weeping and sobbing, the dauphin passed through the corridor, but when they reached the broad staircase which led to the apartments where the queen lived, the dauphin stopped, suppressed his sobs, and hastily dried his eyes.

"I will not weep any more," he said, "it would trouble mamma. I beg you, abbé, say nothing to mamma. I will try to be cheerful and merry, for mamma queen likes much to have me so. Sometimes, when she is sad and has been weeping, I make believe not to notice it, and then I laugh and sing, and jump about, and then her beautiful face will clear up, and sometimes she even smiles a little. So, too, I will be right merry, and she shall notice nothing. You would not suspect that I have been weeping, would you?"

"No, my prince, no one would think you had," answered the abbé, looking with deep emotion into the great blue eyes which the dauphin turned up to his with an inquiring look.

"Well, then, we will go to my mamma queen," cried the dauphin, and he sprang forward and opened the door with a smile, and, half concealed behind the curtains, he asked, in a jesting tone, whether he might have permission to enter her majesty's presence.

Marie Antoinette bade him heartily welcome, and opened her arms to him. The dauphin embraced her and pressed a glowing kiss upon her eyes and upon her lips.

"You are extraordinarily affectionate to-day, my little Louis Charles," said the queen, with a smile. "What is the cause of that?"

"That comes from the fact that to-day I have nothing to give you excepting kisses—not a single flower. They are all withered in my garden, and I do not like to go there any more, for there are no more bouquets to pluck for my dear mamma queen. Mamma, this is my bouquet."

And he kissed and caressed the queen afresh, and brought a glow to her eyes and a smile to her lips.

"Come now, my child, you see that the abbé is waiting, and I believe it is time for the study-hours to begin. What comes first to-day?"

"We have first, grammar," answered the abbé, laying the needful books upon the little table at which the dauphin always took his lessons in the presence of the queen.

"Grammar!" cried the dauphin; "I wish it were history. That I like, but grammar I hate!"

"That comes because you make so many mistakes in it," said the abbé; "and, certainly, grammar is very hard."

The child blushed. "Oh, it is not on that account," he said. "I do not dislike grammar because it is hard, but merely because it is tedious."

"And I will wager that on that account you have forgotten what we went over in our last grammar hour. We were speaking of the three comparatives. But you probably do not remember them."

"You are mistaken," replied the dauphin, smiling. "In proof, hear me. If I say, 'My abbé is a good abbé,' that is the positive. If I say, 'My abbé is better than another abbé,' that is the comparative. And," he continued, turning his eyes toward the queen with an expression of intense affection, "if I say, 'My mamma is the dearest and best of all mammas,' that is the superlative." *

The queen drew the boy to her heart and kissed him, while her tears flowed down upon his auburn curls.

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* The dauphin's own words.—See Beauchesne's "Louis XVII.," vol. i., p. 133.

On the next day, at the time of his accustomed walk, the queen went into the dauphin's room to greet him before he went into the garden.

"Mamma, I beg your permission to remain here," said the dauphin. "My garden does not please me any longer."

"Why not, my son," asked Marie Antoinette, "has any thing happened to you?"

"Yes, mamma," he answered, "something has happened to me. There are so many bad people always standing around the fence, and they look at me with such evil eyes, that I am afraid of them, and they scold and say such hard things. They laugh at me, and say that I am a stupid jack, a baker's boy that does not know how to make a loaf, and they call me a monkey. That angers me and hurts my feelings, and if I begin to cry I am ashamed of myself, for I know that it is very silly to cry before people who mean ill to us. But I am still a poor little boy, and my tears are stronger than I. And so I want you, mamma, not to let me go to the garden any more. Moufflet and I would a great deal rather play in my room. Come here, Moufflet, make your compliments to the queen, and salute her like a regular grenadier."

And smiling, he caught the little dog by the fore-paws, and made him stand up on his hind legs, and threatened Moufflet with his hand till he made him stand erect and let his fore feet hang down very respectfully.

The queen looked down with a smile at the couple, and laughed aloud when the dauphin, still waving his hand threateningly to compel the dog to stand as he was, jumped up, ran to the table, caught up a paper cap, which he had made and painted with red stripes, and put it on Moufflet's head, calling out to him: "Mr. Jacobin, behave respectfully! Make your salutations to her majesty the queen!"

After that day, the dauphin did not go into his garden again, and the park of the Tuileries was now the exclusive property of the populace, that took possession of it with furious eagerness.

The songs of the revolution, the wild curses of the haters of royalty, the coarse laughter and shouting of the rabble—these were the storm-birds which were beating at the windows of the royal apartments.

Marie Antoinette had still one source of enjoyment left to her in her sufferings, her correspondence with her absent friends, and the Duchess de Polignac before all others. Once in a while there was a favorable opportunity to send a letter by the hands of some faithful friend around her, and the queen had then the sad satisfaction at least of being able to express to some sympathizing heart what she was undergoing, without fearing that these complaints would be read by her enemies, as was the case with all letters which were sent by post.

One of these letters to the Duchess de Polignac, which history has preserved, gives a faithful and touching picture of the sorrows and grief of the queen. A translation of it runs thus:

"I cannot deny myself the pleasure of embracing you, my dear heart, but it must be done quickly, for the opportunity is a passing one, although a certain one. I can only write a word, which will be forwarded to you with a large package. We are guarded like criminals, and this restraint is truly dreadfully hard to bear!—constantly too apprehensive for one another, not to be able to approach the window without being loaded with insults; not to be able to take the poor children out into the air without exposing the dear innocents to reproaches, what a situation is ours, my dear heart! And when you think that I suffer not for myself alone, but have to tremble for the king as well, and for our friends who are with us, you will see that the burden is well-nigh unbearable! But, as I have told you before, you absent ones, you keep me up. Adieu, dear heart, let us hope in God, who looks into our consciences, and who knows whether we are not animated by the truest love for this land. I embrace you!

"P. S.—The king has just come in and wants to add a word."

"I will only say, duchess, that you are not forgotten, that we regret receiving so few letters from you, and that, whether near or far away, you and yours are always loved. LOUIS." *

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* Beauchesne, "Louis XVII.," vol. i., p. 143.

Not to be able to show one's self near the window without being showered with insults! Yes, and even into the very middle of her room they followed her. Even when sitting far away from the window, she could not help hearing the loud cries which were thundered out on the pavement below, as the hucksters offered to the laughing crowd the infamous pamphlet, written with a poisoned pen, and entitled "The Life of Marie Antoinette."

At times her anger mastered her, her eyes flashed, her figure was straightened up, and the suffering martyr was transformed for an instant into the proud, commanding queen.

"I will not bear it!" she cried, walking up and down with great strides. "I will speak to them; they shall not insult me without hearing my justification. Yes, I will go down to these people, who call me a foreigner. I will say to them, 'Frenchmen, people have had the want of feeling to tell you that I do not love France, I, the mother of a dauphin, I——' "*

But her voice choked in her tears, and she fled to the extreme end of the room, fell sobbing on her knees, and held both her hands to her ears, in order not to hear the dreadful insults which came up from below and through her windows.

Thus, amid trials which renewed themselves daily, the months passed by. The queen had no longer any hope. She had given up every thing, even the hope of an honorable end, of a death such as becomes a queen, proud and dignified beneath the ruins of a palace laid low by an exasperated populace. She knew that the king would never bring himself to meet such a death, that his weakness would yield to all humiliation, and his good-nature resist all measures that might perhaps bring help. She had sought in vain to inspire him with her zeal. Louis was a good man, but a bad king; his was not a nature to rule and govern, but rather to serve as the scape-goat for the sins of his fathers, and to fall as a victim for the misdeeds which his ancestors had committed, and through which they had excited the wrath of the people, the divine Nemesis that never sleeps.

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* The queen's own words.—See Campan, "Mémoires," vol. ii.

The queen knew and felt this, and this knowledge lay like a mourning veil over her whole thought and being, filling her at times with a moody resignation, and at times with a swiftly-kindling and wrathful pain.

"I am content that we be the victims," cried she, wringing her hands, "but I cannot bear to think that my children too are to be punished for what they have not committed."

This thought of her children was the pillar which always raised the queen up again, when the torture of her daily life cast her to the ground. She would, she must live for her children. She must, so long as a breath remained in her, devote all her powers to retain for her son the dauphin at least the crown beneath whose burden his father sank. She wanted nothing more for herself, all for her son alone.

There were still true friends who wanted to save the queen. Secret tidings came to her that all was ready for her escape. It was against her that the popular rage was chiefly directed, and her life was even threatened. Twice had the attempt been made to kill the queen, and the most violent denunciations of the populace were directed against her. It was therefore the queen whom her friends wanted most to save. Every thing was prepared for the flight, true and devoted friends were waiting for her, ready to conduct her to the boundaries of France, where she should meet deputies sent by her nephew, the Emperor Francis. The plan was laid with the greatest care; nothing but the consent of the queen was needed to bring it to completion, and save her from certain destruction. But Marie Antoinette withheld her acquiescence. "It is of no consequence about my life," she said. "I know that I must die, and I am prepared for it. If the king and my children cannot escape with me, I remain; for my place is at the side of my husband and my children."

At last the king himself, inspired by the courage and energy of his wife, ventured to oppose the decisions and decrees of the all-powerful Assembly. It had put forth two new decrees. It had resolved upon the deportation of all priests beyond the limits of France, and also upon the establishment of a camp of twenty thousand men on the Rhine frontier. With the latter there had been coupled a warning, threatening with death all who should spend any time abroad, and engage in any armed movement against their own country.

To both these decrees Louis refused his sanction; both he vetoed on the 20th of June, 1792.

The populace, which thronged the doors of the National Assembly in immense masses, among whom the emissaries of revolution had been very active, received the news of the king's veto with a howl of rage. The storm-birds of revolution flew through the streets, and shouted into all the windows: "The country is in danger! The king has been making alliances abroad. The Austrian woman wants to summon the armies of her own land against France, and therefore the king has vetoed the decree which punishes the betrayers of their country. A curse on M. Veto! Down with Madame Veto! That is the cry to-day for the revolutionary party. A curse on M. Veto! Down with Madame Veto!"

The watch-cry rolled like a peal of thunder through all the streets and into all the houses; and, while within their closed doors, and in the stillness of their own homes, the well-disposed praised the king for having the courage to protect the priests and the *émigrés*, the evil-disposed bellowed out their curses through all the streets, and called upon the rabble to avenge themselves upon Monsieur and Madame Veto.

Nobody prevented this. The National Assembly let every thing go quietly on, and waited with perfect indifference to see what the righteous anger of the people should resolve to do.

Immense masses of howling, shrieking people rolled up, on the afternoon of the 20th of June, to the Tuileries, where no arrangements had been made for defence, the main entrances not even being protected that day by the National Guard.

The king gave orders, therefore, that the great doors should be opened, and the people allowed to pass in unhindered.

In a quarter of an hour all the staircases, corridors, and halls were filled by a howling, roaring crowd; the room of the king alone was locked, and in this apartment were the royal family and a few faithful friends—the king, bland and calm as ever; the queen, pale, firm, uncomplaining; Madame Elizabeth, with folded hands, praying; the two children drawing closely together, softly weeping, and yet suppressing their sobs, because the queen had, in a whisper, commanded them to keep still.

A little company of faithful servants filled the background of the room, and listened with suspended breath to the axe-strokes with which the savage crowd broke down the doors, and heard the approaching cries of the multitude.

At last a division of the National Guard reached the palace, too late to drive the people out, but perhaps in season to protect the royal family. The door of the royal apartment was opened to the second officer of the National Guard, M. Acloque. He burst in, and kneeling before the king, conjured him, with tears in his eyes, to show himself to the people, and by his presence to calm the savage multitude.

By this time the two children were no longer able to control their feelings and suppress their fear. The dauphin burst into tears and loud cries; he clung affrighted to the dress of his mother; he implored her with the most moving tones to take him away, and go with him to his room. Marie Antoinette stooped down to the poor little fellow, and pressed him and Theresa, who was weeping calmly, to her heart, whispering a few quieting words into their ears.

While the mother was comforting her children, Louis, yielding to Acloque's entreaties, had left the room, in order to show himself to the people. Madame Elizabeth, his sister, followed him through the corridor into the great hall, passing through the seething crowd, which soon separated her from the king. Pushed about on all sides, Madame Elizabeth could not follow, and was now alone in the throng, accompanied only by her equerry, M. Saint-Pardoux. Armed men pressed up against the princess, and horrid cries surged around her.

"There is the Austrian woman!" and at once all pikes, all weapons were directed against the princess.

"For God's sake!" cried M. de Saint Pardoux, "what do you want to do? This is not the queen!"

"Why do you undeceive them?" asked Madame Elizabeth, "their error might save the queen!"

And while she put back one of the bayonets directed against her breast, she said, gently: "Take care, sir, you might wound somebody, and I am convinced that you would be sorry."

The people were amazed at this, and respectfully made way for her to come up with the king. He stood in the middle of the hall, surrounded by a crowd threatening him with wild curses. One of these desperadoes pressed close up to the king, while the others were shouting that they must strangle the whole royal family, and, pulling a bottle and a glass out of his pocket, he filled the latter, gave it to the king, and ordered him to drink to the welfare of the nation.

The king quietly took the glass. "The nation must know that I love it," said he, "for I have made many sacrifices for it. From the bottom of my heart I drink to its welfare," and, in spite of the warning cries of his friends, he put the glass to his lips and emptied it.

The crowd was beside itself with delight, and their cries were answered from without by the demand of the bloodthirsty rabble—"How soon are you going to throw out the heads of the king and the queen?"

Marie Antoinette had meanwhile succeeded in pacifying the dauphin. She raised herself up, and when she saw that the king had gone out, she started toward the door.

Her faithful friends stopped the way; they reminded her that she was not simply a queen, that she was a mother, too. They conjured her with tears to give ear to prudence—not to rush in vain into danger, and imperil the king still more.

"No one shall hinder me from doing what is my duty," cried the queen. "Leave the doorway free."

But her friends would not yield; they defied even the wrath of the queen. At that moment, some of the National Guards came in through another door, and pacified Marie Antoinette, assuring her that the life of the king was not threatened.

In the mean while the shouting came nearer and nearer, the cries resounded from the guard-room, the doors were torn open, and the people surged in, in immense waves, like the sea lashed into fury by the storm. The National Guards rolled a table before the queen and her children, and placed themselves at the two sides to defend them.

Only a bit of wood now separated the queen from her enemies, who brandished their weapons at her. But Marie Antoinette had now regained her whole composure. She stood erect; at her right hand, her daughter, who nestled up to her mother—at her left, the dauphin, who, with wide-open eyes and looks of astonishment, gazed at the people bursting in. Behind the queen were Princesses Lamballe and Tarente, and Madame Tourzel.

A man, with dishevelled hair and bare bosom, gave the queen a handful of rods, bearing the inscription, "For Marie Antoinette!" Another showed her a guillotine, a third a gallows, with the inscription, "Tremble, tyrant! thy hour has come!" Another held up before her, on the point of a pike, a human heart dripping with blood, and cried: "Thus shall they all bleed—the hearts of tyrants and aristocrats!"

The queen did not let her eyes fall, her fixed look rested upon the shrieking and howling multitude; but when this man, with the bleeding heart, approached her, her eyelids trembled—a deathly paleness spread over her cheeks, for she recognized him—Simon the cobbler—and a fearful presentiment told her that this man, who had always been for her the incarnation of hatred, is now, when her life is threatened, to be the source of her chief peril.

From the distance surged in the cries: "Long live Santerre! Long live the Faubourg Saint Antoine! Long live the *sans-culottes!*"

And at the head of a crowd of half-naked fellows, the brewer Santerre, arrayed in the fantastic costume of a robber of the Abruzzo Mountains, with a dagger and pistol in his girdle, dashed into the room, his broad-brimmed hat, with three red plumes, aslant upon his brown hair, that streamed down on both sides of his savage countenance, like the mane of a lion.

The queen lifted the dauphin up, set him upon the table, and whispered softly to him, he must not cry, he must not grieve, and the child smiled and kissed his

THE POPULACE AT THE TUILERIES.

mother's hands. Just then a drunken woman rushed up to the table, threw a red cap down upon it, and ordered the queen, on pain of death, to put it on.

Marie Antoinette threw both her arms around the dauphin, kissed his auburn hair, and turned calmly to General de Wittgenhofen, who stood near her.

"Put the cap upon me," said she, and the women howled with pleasure, while the general, pale with rage and trembling with grief, obeyed the queen's command, and put the red cap upon that hair which trouble had already turned gray in a night.

But, after a minute, General Wittgenhofen took the red cap from the head of the queen, and laid it on the table.

From all sides resounded thus the commanding cry: "The red cap for the dauphin! The tri-color for Little Veto!" And the women tore their three-colored ribbons from their caps and threw them upon the table.

"If you love the nation," cried the women to the queen, "put the red cap on your son."

The queen motioned to Madame Tourzel, who put the red cap on the dauphin, and decked his neck and arms with the ribbons. The child did not understand whether it was a joke or a way of insulting him, and looked on with a smile of astonishment.

Santerre leaned over the table and looked complacently at the singular group. The proud and yet gentle face of the queen was so near him, that when he saw the sweat-drops rolling down from beneath the woollen cap over the dauphin's forehead, even he felt a touch of pity, and, straightening himself up, perhaps to escape the eye of the queen, he called out, roughly: "Take that cap off from that child; don't you see how he sweats?"

The queen thanked him with a mute glance, and took the cap herself from the head of the poor child.

At this point a horde of howling women pressed up to the table, and threatened the queen with their fists, and hurled wild curses at her.

"Only see how proudly and scornfully this Austrian looks at us!" cried a young woman, who stood in the front rank. "She would like to blast us with her eyes, for she hates us."

Marie Antoinette turned kindly to them: "Why should I hate you?" she asked, in gentle tones. "It is you that hate me—you. Have I ever done you any harm?"

"Not to me," answered the young woman, "not to me, but to the nation."

"Poor child!" answered the queen, gently, "they have told you so, and you have believed it. What advantage would it bring to me to harm the nation? You call me the Austrian, but I am the wife of the King of France, the mother of the dauphin. I am French with all my feelings of wife and mother. I shall never see again the land in which I was born, and only in France can I be happy or unhappy. And when you loved me, I was happy there." *

She said this with quivering voice and moving tones, the tears filling her eyes; and while she was speaking the noise was hushed, and even these savage creatures were transformed into gentle, sympathetic women.

Tears came to the eyes of the young woman who before had spoken so savagely to the queen. "Forgive me," she said, weeping, "I did not know you; now I see that you are not bad."

"No, she is not bad," cried Santerre, striking with both fists upon the table, "but bad people have misled her," and a second time he struck the table with his resounding blows. Marie Antoinette trembled a little, and hastily lifting the dauphin from the table, she put him by her side.

"Ah! madame," cried Santerre, smiling, "don't be afraid, they will do you no harm; but just think how you have been misled, and how dangerous it is to deceive the people. I tell you that in the name of the people. For the rest, you needn't fear."

"I am not afraid," said Marie Antoinette, calmly; "no one need ever be afraid who is among brave people," and with a graceful gesture she extended her hands to the National Guards who stood by the table.

A general shout of applause followed the words of the queen; the National Guards covered her hands with kisses, and even the women were touched.

"How courageous the Austrian is!" cried one. "How

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* The queen's own words.—See Beauchesne, vol. i., p. 106.

handsome the prince is!" cried another, and all pressed up to get a nearer view of the dauphin, and a smile or a look from him.

The great eyes of Santerre remained fixed upon the queen, and resting both arms upon the table he leaned over to her until his mouth was close by her ear.

"Madame," he whispered, "you have very unskilful friends; I know people who would serve you better, who——"

But as if ashamed of this touch of sympathy, he stopped, sprang back from the table, and with a thundering voice, commanded all present to march out and leave the palace.

They obeyed his command, filed out in military order past the table, behind which stood the queen with her children and her faithful friends.

A rare procession, a rare army, consisting of men armed with pikes, hatchets, and spades, of women brandishing knives and scissors in their hands, and all directing their countenances, before hyena-like and scornful, but now subdued and sympathetic, to the queen, who with calm eye and gentle look responded to the salutations of the retreating crowd with a friendly nod.

In the mean while the long-delayed help had reached the king: the National Guards had overcome the raging multitude, and gained possession of the great reception-room where Louis was. The mayor of Paris, Pétion, had come at last, and, hailed loudly by the crowd which occupied the whole space in the rear of the National Guards, he approached the king.

"Sire," said he, "I have just learned what is going on here."

"I am surprised at that," answered the king, with a reproachful look, "the mayor of Paris ought to have learned before this about this tumult, which has now been lasting three hours."

"But is now at an end, sire, since I have come," cried Pétion, proudly. "You have now nothing more to fear, sire."

"To fear?" replied Louis with a proud shrug. "A man who has a good conscience does not fear. Feel," he said, taking the hand of the grenadier who stood at his side, "lay your hand upon my heart, and tell this man whether it beats faster." *

Pétion now turned to the people and commanded them to withdraw. "Fellow-citizens," said he, "you began this day wisely and worthily; you have proved that you are free. End the day as you began it. Separate peaceably; do as I do, return to your houses, and go to bed!"

The multitude, flattered by Pétion's praises, began to withdraw, and the National Guards escorted the king into the great council-chamber, where a deputation of the National Assembly had met to pay their respects to the king.

"Where is the queen, where are the children?" cried the king, as, exhausted, he sank into a chair.

His gentlemen hastened out to bring them, and soon the queen and the children came in. With extended arms Marie Antoinette hastened to her husband, and they remained a long time locked in their embrace.

"Papa king," cried the dauphin, "give me a kiss, too! I have deserved it, for I was brave and did not cry when the people put the red cap on my head."

The king stooped down to the child and kissed his golden hair, and then pressed his little daughter, who was nestling up to him, to his heart.

The deputies stood with curious looks around the group, to whom it was not granted, even after such a fearful day and such imminent peril, to embrace each other, and thank God for their preservation, without witnesses.

"Confess, madame," said one of the deputies to Marie Antoinette, in a confidential tone, "confess that you have experienced great anxiety."

"No, sir," replied the queen, "I have not been anxious, but I have suffered severely, because I was separated from the king at a moment when his life was threatened. I had at least my children with me, and so could discharge one of my duties."

"I will not excuse every thing that took place to-day,"

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* The king's words. The grenadier's name whose hand the king took, was Lalanne. Later, in the second year of "the one and indivisible republic," he was condemned to die by the guillotine, because, as stated in the sentence, he showed himself on the 20th of June, 1792, as a common servant of tyranny, and boasted to other citizens that Capet took his hand, laid it upon his heart, and said: "Feel, my friend, whether it beats quicker."—See Hue, "Dernières Années de Louis Seize," p. 180.

said the deputy, with a shrug. "But confess at least, madame, that the people conducted themselves very well."

"Sir, the king and I are convinced of the natural good-nature of the people; they are only bad when they are led astray."

Some other deputies approached the dauphin, and directed various questions to him, in order to convince themselves about his precocious understanding that was so much talked about.

One of the gentlemen, speaking of the day that had gone by, compared it with St. Bartholomew's night.

"The comparison does not hold," cried another: "here is no Charles the Ninth."

"And no Catherine de Medicis either," said the dauphin, quickly, pressing the hand of the queen to his lips.

"Oh! see the little scholar," cried the by-standers. "Let us see whether he knows as much about geography as about history!"

And all pressed up to him, to put questions to him about the situation and boundaries of France, and about the division of the French territory into departments and districts. The prince answered all these questions quickly and correctly. After every answer he cast an inquiring glance at the queen, and when he read in her looks that his answer had been correct, his eyes brightened, and his cheeks glowed with pleasure.

"Our dauphin is really very learned," cried one of the deputies. "I should like to know whether he has paid any attention yet to the arts. Do you love music, my little prince?"

"Ah, sir," answered the dauphin, eagerly, "whoever has heard mamma sing and play, must love music!"

"Do you sing too, prince?"

The dauphin raised his eyes to his mother. "Mamma," he asked, "shall I sing the prayer of this morning?"

Marie Antoinette nodded. "Sing it, my son, for perhaps God heard it this morning, and has graciously answered it."

The dauphin sank upon his knees, and folding his hands, he raised his head and turned his blue eyes toward heaven, and, with a sweet voice and a mild, smiling look, he sang these words:

"Ciel, entends la prière
Qu'ici je fais;
Conserve un si bon père
A ses sujets." *

A deep, solemn silence reigned while the dauphin's voice rang through the room. The faces of the deputies, hitherto defiant and severe, softened, deeply moved. They all looked at the beautiful boy, who was still on his knees, his countenance beaming, and with a smile upon it like the face of one in a blissful dream. No one ventured to break the silence. The king, whose arm was thrown around the neck of his daughter, looked affectionately at the dauphin; Madame Elizabeth had folded her hands, and was praying; but Marie Antoinette, no longer able to control her deep emotion, covered her face with her hands, and wept in silence.

From this day the life of the royal family was one of constant excitement—an incessant, feverish expectation of coming evil. The king bore it all with an uncomplaining resignation; no one drew from him a complaint, no one a reproach. But the thought never seemed to occur to him that perhaps even yet safety might be attained by energy, by spirit, or even by flight.

He had surrendered all; he was ready to suffer as a Christian instead of rising as a king, and preferred to fall in honorable battle rather than to live despised.

Marie Antoinette had given up her efforts to inspire her husband with her own energetic will. She knew that all was in vain, and had accepted her fate. Since she could not live as a queen, she would at least die as one. She made her preparations for this calmly and with characteristic decision. "They will kill me, I know," she said to her maids. "I have only one duty left me, to prepare myself to die!"

She lost her accustomed spirit, wept much, and exhibited

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* See Beauchesne, vol. i., p. 146. This scene is historical. See Hue, "Dernières Années de Louis XVI." This prayer is from the opera so much admired at that time, "Peter the Great:"

"O Heaven, accept the prayer,
I offer here:
Unto his subjects spare
My father dear."

a great deal of feeling. Yet she still stood guard over the shattered throne like a resolute sentinel, and looked around with sharp and searching glances, to keep an eye on the enemy, and to be ready for his nearer approach.

She still continued to receive news about every thing that transpired in Paris, every thing that was resolved upon in the National Assembly and discussed in the clubs, and had the libels and pamphlets which were directed at her all sent to her. Marie Antoinette understood the condition of the capital and the feeling of the people better than did the king (who often sat for hours, and at times whole days, silent and unoccupied) better even than did the ministers. She received every morning the reports of the emissaries, followed the intrigues of the conspirators, and was acquainted with the secret assemblies which Marat called together, and the alliances of the clubs. She knew about the calling together of the forty-eight sections of the Paris "fraternity" in one general convention. She knew that Pétion, Danton, and Manuel, three raving republicans, were at the head, and that their emissaries were empowered to stir up the suburbs of the city. She knew, too, that the monsters from Marseilles, who had been active on the 20th of June, were boasting that they were going to repeat the deeds of that day on a greater scale. Nor was it unknown to her that more than half the deputies in the National Assembly belonged to the Jacobin party, and that they were looking for an opportunity to strike a fresh blow at royalty. Very often, when at dead of night Marie Antoinette heard the noisy chorus of the rioters from Marseilles singing beneath her windows, "*Allons, enfants de la patrie*," or the Parisians chanting the "*Ça ira, ça ira!*" she sprang from her bed (she now never disrobed herself on retiring), hurried to the beds of her children to see that they were not in danger, or called her maids and commanded them to light the candles, that they might at least see the danger which threatened.

At last, on the night of the 9th of August, the long-feared terror arrived.

A gun fired in the court of the Tuileries announced its advent. Marie Antoinette sprang from her bed, and sent her waiting-maid to the king to waken him. The king had already risen; his ministers and a few tried friends were now with him. The queen wakened her children, and assisted in dressing them. She then went with the little ones to the king, who received them with an affectionate greeting. At length a blast of trumpets announced that the movement had become general; the thunder of cannon and the peals of bells awakened the sleeping city.

The royal family, crowded close together, silently awaited the stalking of the republic into the halls of the king's palace, or the saving of the monarchy by the grace of God and the bravery of their faithful friends. For even then monarchy had those who were true to it; and while the trumpet-blasts continued and the bells to ring, to awaken republicans to the struggle, the sounds were at the same time the battle-cry of the royalists, and told them that the king was in danger and needed their help.

About two hundred noblemen had remained in Paris, and had not followed the royal princes to Coblentz to take arms against their own country. They had remained in Paris, in order to defend the monarchy to the last drop of their blood, and at least to be near the throne, if they were not able to hold it up longer. In order not to be suspected, they carried no arms, and yet it was known that beneath the silk vest of the cavalier they concealed the dagger of the soldier, and they received in consequence the appellation of "Chevaliers of the Dagger."

At the first notes of the trumpet the nobility had hurried on the night of the 10th of August to the Tuileries, which were already filled with grenadiers, Swiss guards, and volunteers of every rank, who had hastened thither to protect the royal family. All the staircases, all the corridors and rooms, were occupied by them.

The "Chevaliers of the Dagger" marched in solemn procession by them all to the grand reception-room, where were the king, the queen, and the children. With respectful mien they approached the royal pair, imploring the king's permission to die for him, and beseeching the queen to touch their weapons, in order to make them victorious, and to allow them to kiss the royal hand, in order to sweeten death for them. There were cries of enthusiasm and loyalty on all sides. "Long live the king of our fathers!" cried the young people. "Long live the king of our children!" cried the old men, taking the dauphin in their arms and raising him above their heads, as if he were the living banner in whose defence they wished to die.

As the morning dawned, the king, at the pressing request of his wife, walked with her and the children through the halls and galleries of the palace, to reanimate the courage of their defenders who were assembled there, and to thank them for their fidelity. Everywhere the royal family was received with enthusiasm, everywhere oaths of loyalty to death resounded through the rooms. The king then went, accompanied by a few faithful friends, down into the park, to review the battalions of the National Guard who were stationed there.

When Louis appeared, the cry, "Long live the king!" began to lose the unanimity which had characterized it in the palace. It was suppressed and overborne by a hostile murmur, and the farther the king advanced, the louder grew these mutterings; till at last, from hundreds and hundreds of throats, the thundering cry resounded, "Abdication or death! Long live Pétion! Resignation or death!"

The king turned hastily around, and, with pale face and forehead covered with drops of cold sweat, he returned to the palace.

"All is lost!" cried the queen, bitterly. "Nothing more remains for us than to die worthily."

But soon she raised herself up again, and new courage animated her soul, when she saw that new defenders were constantly pressing into the hall, and that even many grenadiers of the National Guard mingled in the ranks of the nobility.

But these noblemen, these "Chevaliers of the Dagger," excited mistrust, and a major of the National Guard demanded their removal with a loud voice.

"No," cried the queen, eagerly, "these noblemen are our best friends. Place them before the mouth of the cannon, and they will show you how death for one's king is met. Do not disturb yourselves about these brave people," she continued, turning to some grenadiers who were approaching her, "your interests and theirs are common.

Every thing that is dearest to you and them—wives, children, property—depends upon your courage and your common bravery."

The grenadiers extended their hands to the chevaliers, and mutual oaths were exchanged to die for the royal family, to save the throne or to perish with it. It was a grand and solemn moment, full of lofty eloquence! The hearts of these noblemen and these warriors longed impatiently for death. With their hands laid upon their weapons, they awaited its coming.

The populace rolled up in great masses to the palace. Wild shrieks were heard, the thunder of cannon, the harsh cries of women, and the yells of men. Within the palace they listened with suspended breath. The queen straightened herself up, grasped with a quick movement the hands of her children, drew them to herself, and, with head bent forward and with breathless expectation, gazed at the door, like a lioness awaiting her enemy, and making herself ready to defend her young with her own life.

The door was suddenly opened, and the attorney-general Röderer burst in.

"Sire," cried he, with impassioned utterance, "you must save yourself! All opposition is vain. Only the smallest part of the National Guard is still to be trusted, and even this part only waits the first pretext to fraternize with the populace. The cannoneers have already withdrawn the loading from the cannon, because they are unwilling to fire upon the people. The king has no time to lose. Sire, there is protection for you only in the National Assembly, and only the representatives of the people can now protect the royal family."

The queen uttered a cry of anger and horror. "How!" she cried. "What do you say? We seek protection with our worst enemies? Never, oh, never! Rather will I be nailed to these walls, than leave the palace to go to the National Assembly!" *

And turning to the king, who stood silent and undecided, she spoke to him with flaming words, with glowing eloquence, addressed him as the father of the dauphin, the successor of Henry IV. and Louis XIV., sought to ani-

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* The queen's own words.—See Beauchesne, vol. i., p. 90.

mate his ambition and touch his heart, and tried for the last time to kindle him with her courage and her decision.

In vain, all in vain. The king remained silent and undecided. A cry, one single cry of grief, burst from the lips of the queen, and one moment her head sank upon her breast.

"Hasten, hasten, sire!" cried Röderer, "every moment increases the peril. In a quarter of an hour perhaps the queen and the children will be lost beyond remedy!"

These words awakened the king from his reverie. He looked up and nodded his head. "We can do nothing else," he said. "Let us go at once to the National Assembly."

"Sir," cried the queen, turning to Röderer, "is it true that we are deserted by all?"

"Madame," answered the attorney-general, sadly, "all opposition is in vain, it will only increase the danger. Would you suffer yourself, the king, your children, and friends, to be killed?"

"God forbid it! Would that I alone could be the offering!"

"Another minute," urged Röderer, "perhaps another second, and it is impossible to guarantee your life, and perhaps that of your husband and children."

"My children!" cried the queen, throwing her arms around them, and drawing them to her breast. "No, oh no, I will not give them over to the knife!"

One sigh, one last sob, burst from her lips, and then she released herself from the children, and approached the king and his ministers.

"This is the last sacrifice," she said, heavily, "that I can offer. I submit myself, M. Röderer," and then with louder tones, as if she wanted to call all present to be witnesses, she continued, "will you pledge yourself for the person of the king, and for that of my son?"

"Madame," answered Röderer, solemnly, "I pledge myself for this, that we are all ready to die at your side. That is all that I can promise."

And now the noblemen and the grenadiers pressed up to take the king and queen in their escort.

"For God's sake," cried Röderer, "no demonstration, or the king is lost!"

"Remain, my friends," said the king, stolidly, "await our return here."

"We shall soon return," said Marie Antoinette; and leading her two children, she followed the king, who walked slowly through the hall. Princess Lamballe and Madame Tourzel brought up the rear.

It was done. The dying monarchy left the royal palace to put itself under the protection of the revolution, which was soon to give birth to the republic.

It was six o'clock in the morning when the royal family crossed the threshold of the Tuileries—in front the king, conducting Princess Elizabeth on his arm, behind him the queen with the two children.

Before leaving the palace, the king received tidings that a part of the National Guard had withdrawn, in order to protect their families and their property from an attack of the populace, and that another part had declared itself against the king and in favor of the revolution.

Louis made his way through the seething crowd that scarcely opened to allow a free passage for the royal family, and overwhelmed them with curses, insults, and abuse. Some members of the National Assembly went in advance, and could themselves scarcely control the raging waves of popular fury.

On the Terrace des Feuillants the people shouted, "Down with the tyrants! To death, to death with them!"

The dauphin cried aloud with fright, for the bloody hands of two yelling women were extended after him. A grenadier sprang forward, seized the boy with his strong arm, and raised him upon his shoulder.

"My son, give me back my son!" cried the queen, wildly.

The grenadier bowed to her. "Do not be afraid, do you not recognize me?"

Marie Antoinette looked at him, and the hint of a smile passed over her face. She did indeed recognize him who, like a good angel, was always present when danger and death threatened her. It was Toulan, the faithful one, by her side in the uniform of a National Guardsman. "Courage, courage, good queen, the demons are loose, but good angels are near thee too; and where those curse and howl, these bring blessing and reconciliation."

"Down with the tyrants!" roared the savage women.

"Do not be afraid, my prince," said the grenadier, to the dauphin whom he carried upon his shoulder, in order to protect him from the thronging of the crowd. "Nobody will hurt you."

"Not me, but my dear papa," sobbed the child, while the tears rolled over his pale cheeks.

The poor child trembled and was afraid, and how could he help it? Even the king was terrified for a moment, and felt as if the tears were coming into his eyes. The queen too wept, dried her tears, and then wept again. The sad march consumed more than an hour, in order to traverse the bit of way to the Manège, where the National Assembly met. Before the doors of this building the cries were doubled; the attorney-general harangued the mob, and sought to quiet it, and pushed the royal family into the narrow corridor, in which, hemmed in by abusive crowds, they made their way forward slowly. At last the hall doors opened, and as Marie Antoinette passed in behind the king, Toulan gave the little dauphin to her, who flung both his arms around the neck of his mother.

A death-like silence reigned in the hall. The deputies looked with dark faces at the new-comers. No one rose to salute the king, no word of welcome was spoken.

The king took his place by the side of the president, the queen and her ladies took the chairs of the ministers. Then came an angry cry from the tribune: "The dauphin must sit with the king, he belongs to the nation. The Austrian has no claim to the confidence of the people."

An officer came down to take the child away, but Louis Charles clung to his mother, fear was expressed on his features, tears stood in his eyes, and won a word of sympathy, so that the officer did not venture to remove the prince forcibly.

A deep silence sat in again, till the king raised his voice. "I have come hither," he said, "to prevent a great crime, and because I believe that I am safest surrounded by the representatives of the nation."

"Sire," replied President Vergniaud, "you can reckon upon the devotion of the National Assembly. It knows its duties; its members have sworn to live and to die in defence of the rights of the people and of the constitutional authorities."

Voices were heard at this point from all sides of the hall, declaring that the constitution forbids the Assembly holding its deliberations in the presence of the king and the queen.

They then took the royal family into the little low box scarcely ten feet long, in which the reporters of the "Logograph" used to write their accounts of the doings of the Assembly. Into this narrow space were a king, a queen, with her sister and her children, their ministers and faithful servants, crowded, to listen to the discussions concerning the deposition of the king.

From without there came into the hall the wild cry of the populace that the Swiss guards had been killed, and shouts accompanied the heads as they were carried about on the points of pikes. The crack of muskets was heard, and the roar of cannon. The last faithful regiments were contending against the army of the revolutionists, while within the hall the election by the French people of a General Convention was discussed.

This scene lasted the whole day; the whole day the queen sat in the glowing heat, her son asleep in her lap, motionless, and like a marble statue. She appeared to be alive only when once in a while a sigh or a faint moan escaped her. A glass of water mixed with currant-juice was the only nourishment she took through the day.

At about five in the afternoon, while the Assembly was still deliberating about the disposal of the king, Louis turned composedly around to the valet who was standing back of him.

"I am hungry," he said; "bring me something to eat!"

Hue hastened to bring, from a restaurant near by, a piece of roast chicken, some fruit and stewed plums; a small table was procured, and carried into the reporters' box of the "Logograph."

The countenance of the king lightened up a little, as he sat down at the table and ate his dinner with a good appetite. He did not hear the suppressed sobs that issued from a dark corner of the box. To this corner the unhappy woman had withdrawn, who yesterday was Queen of

France, and whose pale cheeks reddened with shame at this hour to see the king eating with his old relish!

The tears started afresh from her eyes, and, in order to dry them, she asked for a handkerchief, for her own was already wet with her tears, and with the sweat which she had wiped from the forehead of her sleeping boy. But no one of her friends could reach her a handkerchief that was not red with the blood of those who had been wounded in the defence of the queen!

It was only at two o'clock in the night that the living martyrdom of this session ended, and the royal family were conducted to the cells of the former Convent des Feuillants, which was above the rooms of the Assembly, and which had hastily been put in readiness for the night quarters of the royal family. Hither armed men, using their gun-barrels as candlesticks for the tapers which they carried, marched, conducting a king and a queen to their improvised sleeping-rooms. A dense crowd of people, bearing weapons, surrounded them, and often closed the way, so that it needed the energetic command of the officer in charge to make a free passage for them. The populace drew back, but bellowed and sang into the ears of the queen as she passed by:

"Madame Véto avait promis
D'égorger tout Paris."

These horrible faces, these threatening, abusive voices, frightened the dauphin, who clung tremblingly to his mother. Marie Antoinette stooped down to him and whispered a few words in his ear. At once the countenance of the boy brightened, and he sprang quickly and joyfully up the staircase; but at the top he stood still, and waited for his sister, who was so heavy with sleep that she had to be led slowly up. "Listen, Theresa," said the prince, joyously, "mamma has promised me that I shall sleep in her room with her, because I was so good before the bad people." * And he jumped about delightedly into the rooms which had been opened, and in which a supper had been even prepared. But suddenly, his countenance darkened, and his eyes wandered around with an anxious look.

"Where is Moufflet?" he asked. "He came with me,

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* Goncourt.—"Histoire de Marie Antoinette," p. 234.

and he was with me when we left the box. Moufflet, Moufflet, where are you, Moufflet?" and asking this question loudly, the dauphin hurried through the four rooms, everywhere seeking after the little dog, the inheritance from his brother, the former Dauphin of France.

But Moufflet did not come, and all search was in vain; no Moufflet was to be found. He had probably been lost in the crowd, or been trodden under foot.

When at last silence and peace came, and the royal family were resting on their hard beds, sighs and suppressed sobs were heard from where the dauphin lay. It was the little fellow weeping for his lost dog. The heir of the kings of France had to-day lost his last possession—his little, faithful dog.

Marie Antoinette stooped down and kissed his wet eyes. "Do not cry, my boy; Moufflet will come back again to-morrow."

"To-morrow! certainly, mamma?"

"Certainly."

The boy dried his tears, and went to sleep with a smile upon his lips.

But Marie Antoinette did not sleep; sitting erect in her bed, she listened to the cries and fiendish shoutings which came up from the terrace of the Feuillants, as the people heaped their abuses upon her, and demanded her head.

On the next day new sufferings! The royal family had to go again into the little box which they had occupied the day before; they had to listen to the deliberations of the National Assembly about the future residence of the royal family, which had made itself unworthy to inhabit the Tuileries, while even the Luxemburg palace was no suitable residence for Monsieur and Madame Veto.

The queen had in the mean time regained her self-possession and calmness, she could even summon a smile to her lips with which to greet her children and the faithful friends who thronged around her in order to be near her in these painful hours. She was pleased with the attentions of the wife of the English ambassador, Lady Sutherland, who sent linen and clothes of her own son for the dauphin. The queen also received from Madame Tourzel her watch with many thanks, since she had been robbed of her own and her purse on the way to the Convent des Feuillants.

On receiving news of this theft, the five gentlemen present hastened to lay all the gold and notes that they carried about them on the table before they withdrew. But Marie Antoinette had noticed this. "Gentlemen," she said, with thanks and deep feeling, "gentlemen, keep your money; you will want it more than we, for you will, I trust, live longer." *

Death had no longer any terrors for the queen, for she had too often looked him in the eye of late to be afraid. She had with joy often seen him take away her faithful servants and friends. Death would have been lighter to bear than the railings and abuse which she had to experience upon her walks from the Logograph's reporters' seat to the rooms in the Convent des Feuillants. On one of these walks she saw in the garden some respectably dressed people standing and looking without hurling insults at her.—Full of gratitude, the queen smiled and bowed to them. On this, one of the men shouted: "You needn't take the trouble to shake your head so gracefully, for you won't have it much longer!"

"I would the man were right!" said Marie Antoinette softly, going on to the hall of the Assembly to hear the representatives of the nation discuss the question whether the Swiss guards, who had undertaken to defend the royal family with weapons in their hands, should not be condemned to death as traitors to the French nation.

At length, after five days of continued sufferings, the Assembly became weary of insulting and humiliating longer those who had been robbed of their power and dignity; and it was announced to the royal family that they would hereafter reside in the Temple, and be perpetual prisoners of the nation.

On the morning of the 18th of August two great carriages, each drawn by only two horses, stood in the court des Feuillants ready to carry the royal family to the Temple. In the first of these sat the king, the queen, their two children, Madame Elizabeth, Princess Lamballe, Madame Tourzel and her daughter; and besides these, Pétion

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* The queen's own words.—See "Beauchesne," vol. i., p. 206.

the mayor of Paris, the attorney-general, and a municipal officer. In the second carriage were the servants of the king and two officials. A detachment of the National Guards escorted the carriages, on both sides of which dense masses of men stood, incessantly pouring out their abuse and insults.

In the Place Vendôme the procession stopped, and with scornful laughter they showed the king the scattered fragments, upon the pavements, of the equestrian statue of Louis XIV., which had stood there, and which had been thrown from its pedestal by the anger of the people. "So shall it be with all tyrants!" shouted and roared the mob, raising their fists threateningly.

"How bad they are!" said the dauphin, looking with widely-opened eyes at the king, between whose knees he was standing.

"No," answered Louis, gently, "they are not bad, they are only misled."

At seven in the evening they reached the gloomy building which was now to be the home of the King and Queen of France. "Long live the nation!" roared the mob, which filled the inner court as Marie Antoinette and her husband dismounted from the carriage. "Long live the nation!—down with the tyrants!" The queen paid no attention to the cries; she looked down at her black shoe, which was torn, and out of whose tip her white silk stocking peeped. "See," she said, to Princess Lamballe, who was walking by her side, "see my foot, it would hardly be believed that the Queen of France has no shoes."

CHAPTER XX.

TO THE 21ST OF JANUARY.

"We must look misfortune directly in the eye, and have courage to bear it worthily," said Marie Antoinette. "We are prisoners, and shall long remain so! Let us seek to have a kind of household life even in our prison. Let us make a fixed plan how to spend our days."

"You are right, Marie," replied Louis; "let us arrange how to spend each day. As I am no longer a king, I will be the teacher of my son, and try to educate him to be a good king."

"Do you believe, then, husband, that there are to be kings after this in France?" asked Marie Antoinette, with a shrug.

"Well," answered Louis, "we will at least seek to give him such an education that he shall be able to fill worthily whatever station he may be called to. I will be his teacher in the sciences."

"And I will interest him and our daughter in music and drawing," said the queen.

"And you will allow me to teach my niece to embroider an altar-cover," said Madame Elizabeth.

"And in the evening," said Marie Antoinette, nodding playfully to Princess Lamballe, "in the evening we will read comedies, that the children may learn of our Lamballe the art of declamation. We will seek to forget the past, and turn our thoughts only to the present, whatever it may be. You see that these four days that we have spent here in the Temple have been good schoolmasters for me, and have made me patient, and—but what is that?" exclaimed the queen; "did you not hear steps before the door? It must be something unusual, for it is not yet so late as the officials are accustomed to come. Where are the children?"

And, in the anxiety of her motherly love, the queen hastened up the little staircase which led to the second story of the Temple, where was the chamber of the dauphin, together with the general sitting-room.

Louis Charles sprang forward to meet his mother, and asked her whether she had come to fulfil her promise, and go out with him into the garden. The queen, instead of answering, clasped him in her arms, and beckoned to Theresa to come to her side. "Oh! my children, my dear children, I only wanted to see you; I——"

The door opened, and the king, followed by his sister, Princess Lamballe, and Madame Tourzel, entered.

"What is it?" cried Marie Antoinette. "Some new misfortune, is it not?"

She was silent, for she now became aware of the presence of both of the municipal officials, who had come in behind the ladies, and in whose presence she would not complain. Manuel, who, since the 10th of August, had been attorney-general—Manuel, the enemy of the queen, the chief supervisor of the prisoners in the Temple, was there—and Marie Antoinette would not grant him the triumph of seeing her weakness.

"You have something to say to us, sir," said the queen, with a voice which she compelled to be calm.

Yes, Manuel had something to say to her. He had to lay before her and the king a decree of the National Assembly, which ordered old parties who had accompanied "Louis Capet and his wife" to the Temple, either under the name of friends or servants, to leave the place at once.

The queen had not a word of complaint, but her pride was vanquished; she suffered Manuel to see her tears. She extended her arms, and called the faithful Lamballe to her, mingled her tears with those of the princess, and then gave a parting kiss to Madame de Tourzel and her daughter.

The evening of that day was a silent and solitary one in the rooms of the Temple. Their last servants had been taken away from the royal prisoners, and only Clery, the valet of the king, had been suffered to remain, to wait upon his master. The next morning, however, Manuel came to inform the queen that she would be allowed to have two other women to wait upon her, and gave her a list of names from which she might choose. But Marie Antoinette, with proud composure, refused to accept this offer. "We have been deprived of those who remained faithful to us out of love, and devoted their services to us as a free gift, and we will not supply their places by servants who are paid by our enemies."

"Then you will have to wait upon yourselves," cried Manuel, with a harsh voice.

"Yes," answered the queen, gently, "we will wait upon ourselves, and take pleasure in it."

And they did wait upon themselves; they took the tenderest care one of another, and performed all these offices with constant readiness. The king had, happily, been allowed to retain his valet, who dressed him, who knew all his quiet, moderate ways, and who arranged every thing for the king in the little study at the Temple, as he had been accustomed to do in the grand cabinet at Versailles. The ladies waited upon themselves, and Marie Antoinette undertook the task of dressing and undressing the dauphin.

The little fellow was the sunbeam which now and then would light up even the sombre apartments of the Temple. With the happy carelessness of infancy, he had forgotten the past, and did not think of the future; he lived only in the present, sought to be happy, and found his happiness when he succeeded in calling a smile to the pale, proud lips of the queen, or in winning a word of praise from the king for his industry and his attention.

And thus the days went by with the royal family—monotonous, sad, and dreary. No greeting of love, no ray of hope came in from the outer world, to lighten up the thick walls of the old building. No one brought the prisoners news of what was transpiring without. They were too well watched for any of their friends to be able to communicate with them. This was the greatest trial for the royal captives. Not a moment, by day or by night, when the eyes of the sentries were not directed toward them, and their motions observed! The doors to the anterooms were constantly open, and in them always there were officials, with searching looks and with severe faces, watching the prisoners in the inner rooms. Even during the night this trial did not cease, and the Queen of France had to undergo the indignity of having the door of her sleeping-room constantly open, while the officials, who spent the night in their arm-chairs in the anteroom, drank, played, and smoked, always keeping an eye on her bed, in order to be sure of her presence.

Even when she undressed herself, the doors of the queen's apartment were not closed; a mere small screen stood at the foot of the bed; this was removed as soon as the queen had disrobed and lain down.

This daily renewed pain and humiliation—this being watched every minute—was the heaviest burden that the prisoners of the Temple had to bear, and the proud heart of Marie Antoinette rose in exasperation every day against these restraints. She endeavored to be patient and to choke the grief that rose within her, and yet she must sometimes give expression to it in tears and threatening words, which now fell like cold thunderbolts from the lips of the queen, and no longer kindled any thing, no longer dashed any thing in pieces.

Thus August passed and September began, sad, gloomy, and hopeless. On the morning of the 3d of September, Manuel came to the royal prisoners, to tell them that Paris was in great excitement, and that they were not to go into the garden that day as usual about noon, but were to remain in their rooms.

"How is it with my friend, Princess Lamballe?" asked Marie Antoinette.

Manuel was perplexed; he even blushed and cast down his eyes, as he answered that that morning the princess had been taken to the prison La Force. Then, in order to divert conversation from this channel, Manuel told the prisoners about the tidings which had recently reached Paris, and had thrown the city into such excitement and rage.

The neighboring powers had made an alliance against France. The King of Prussia was advancing with a powerful army, and had already confronted the French force before Chalons, while the Emperor of Germany was marching against Alsace. Marie Antoinette forgot the confusion and perplexity which Manuel had exhibited, in the importance of this news. She hoped again; she found in her elastic spirit support in these tidings, and began to think of the possibility of escape. It did not trouble her that beneath her windows she heard a furious cry, as the crowd surged up to the prison walls: "The head of the Austrian! Give us the head of the Austrian!" She had so often heard that—it had been so long the daily refrain to the sorrowful song of riot which filled Paris—that it had lost all meaning for Marie Antoinette.

Nor did it disturb her at all that she heard the loud beatings of drums approaching like muffled thunder, that trumpets were blown, that musketry rattled, and loud war cries resounded in the distant streets.

Marie Antoinette paid no heed to this She heard constantly ringing before her ear Manuel's words: "The neighboring nations have allied against France. The King of Prussia is before Chalons. The Emperor of Germany is advancing upon Strasburg." "O God of Heaven, be merciful to us! Grant to our friends victory over our enemies. Release us from these sufferings and pains, that our children may at least find the happiness which for us is buried forever in the past."

And yet Marie Antoinette could speak to no one of her hopes and fears. She must breathe her prayer in her own heart alone, for the municipal officials were there, and the two servants who had been forced upon the prisoners, Tison and his wife, the paid servants of their enemies.

Only the brave look and the clearer brow told the king of the hopes and wishes of his wife, but he responded to them with a faint shrug and a sad smile.

All at once, after the royal family had sat down to take their dinner at the round table—all at once there was a stir in the building which was before so still. Terrible cries were heard, and steps advancing up the staircase. The two officials, who were sitting in the open anteroom, stood and listened at the door. This was suddenly opened, and a third official entered, pale, trembling with rage, and raising his clinched fists tremblingly against the king.

"The enemy is in Verdun," cried he. "We shall all be undone, but you shall be the first to suffer!"

The king looked quietly at him; but the dauphin, terrified at the looks of the angry man and his loud voice, burst into a violent fit of weeping and sobbing, and Marie Antoinette and the little Theresa strove in vain to quiet the little fellow by gentle words.

A fourth official now entered, and whispered secretly to his colleagues.

"Is my family no longer in safety here?" asked the king.

The official shrugged his shoulders. "The report has gone abroad that the royal family is no longer in the Temple. This has excited the people, and they desire that you all show yourselves at the windows, but we will not permit it; you shall not show yourselves. The public must have more confidence in its servants."

"Yes," cried the other official, still raising his fists—

"yes, that it must; but if the enemy come, the royal family shall die!"

And when at these words the dauphin began to cry aloud again, he continued: "I pity the poor little fellow, but die he must!"

Meanwhile the cries outside were still louder, and abusive epithets were distinctly heard directed at the queen. A fifth official then came in, followed by some soldiers, in order to assure themselves, in the name of the people, that the Capet family was still in the tower. This official demanded, in an angry voice, that they should go to the window and show themselves to the people.

"No, no, they shall not do it," cried the other functionaries.

"Why not?" asked the king. "Come, Marie."

He extended his hand to her, and advanced with her to the window.

"No, don't do it!" cried the official, rushing to the window.

"Why not?" asked the king, in astonishment.

"Well," cried the man, with threatening fist, "the people want to show you the head of Lamballe, that you may see how the nation takes vengeance on its tyrants."

At that same instant there arose behind the window-pane a pale head encircled with long, fair hair, the livid forehead sprinkled with blood, the eyes lustreless and fixed—the head of Princess Lamballe, which the people had dressed by a *friseur*, to hoist it upon a pike and show it to the queen.

The queen had seen it; staggering she fell back upon a chair; she gazed fixedly at the window, even after the fearful phantom had disappeared. Her lips were open, as if for a cry which had been silenced by horror. She did not weep, she did not complain, and even the caresses of the children, the gentle address of Princess Elizabeth, and the comforting words of the king could not rouse her out of this stupefying of her whole nature.

Princess Lamballe had been murdered, and deep in her soul the queen saw that this was only the prelude to the fearful tragedy, in which her family would soon be implicated.

Poor Princess Lamballe! She had been killed because she had refused to repeat the imprecations against the queen, which they tried to extort from her lips: "Swear that you love liberty and equality; swear that you hate the king, the queen, and every thing pertaining to royalty."

"I will swear to the first," was the princess's answer, "but to the last I cannot swear, for it does not lie in my heart."

This was the offence of the princess, that hate did not lie in her heart—the offence of so many others who were killed on that 3d of September, that dreadful day on which the hordes of Marseilles opened the prisons, in order to drag the prisoners before the tribunals, or to execute them without further sentence.

The days passed by, and they had to be borne. Marie Antoinette had regained her composure and her proud calmness. She had to overcome even this great grief, and the heart of the queen had not yet been broken. She still loved, she still hoped. She owed it to her husband and children not to despair, and better days might come even yet. "We must keep up courage," she said, "to live till the dawn of this better day."

And it required spirit to bear the daily torture of this life! Always exposed to scorn and abuse! Always watched by the eyes of mocking, reviling men! Always scrutinized by Madame Tison, her servant, who followed every one of her motions as a cat watches its prey, and among all these sentinels the most obnoxious of all was the cobbler Simon.

Commissioned by the authorities to supervise the workmen and masons who were engaged in restoring the partially ruined ancient portion of the Temple, Simon had made himself at home within the building, to discharge his duties more comfortably. It was his pleasure to watch this humiliated royal family, to see them fall day by day, and hear the curses that accompanied them at every step. He never appeared in their presence without insulting them, and encouraging with loud laughter those who imitated him in this.

Some of the officials in charge never spoke excepting with dreadful abuse of the king, the queen, and the children.

One of them cried to his comrade in presence of Marie Antoinette: "If the hangman does not guillotine this accursed family, I will do it!"

When the royal family went down to take their walk in the garden, Santerre used to come up with a troop of soldiers. The sentries whom they passed shouldered arms before Santerre; but as soon as he had passed and the king came, they grounded their arms, and pretended not to see him. In the door that led into the garden, Rocher, the turnkey, used to stand, and take his pleasure in letting the royal family wait before unlocking, while he blew great clouds of smoke into their faces from his long tobacco-pipe. The National Guards who stood in the neighborhood used to laugh at this, and hurl all sorts of low, vile words at the princesses. Then, while the royal prisoners were taking their walk, the cannoneers used to collect in the allées through which they wandered, and dance to the music of revolutionary songs which some of them sang. Sometimes the gardeners who worked there hurried up to join them in this dance, and to encircle the prisoners in their wild evolutions. One of these people displayed his sickle to the king one day, and swore that he would cut off the head of the queen with it. And when, after their sad walk, they had returned to the Temple, they were received by the sentinels and the turnkey with renewed insults; and, as if it were not enough to fill the ear with this abuse, the eye too must have its share. The vilest of expressions were written upon the walls of the corridors which the royal party had to traverse. You might read there: "Madame Veto will soon be dancing again. Down with the Austrian she-wolf! The wolf's brood must be strangled. The king must be hanged with his own ribbon!" Another time they had drawn a gallows, on which a figure was hanging, with the expression written beneath, "Louis taking an air-bath!"

And so, even the short walks of the prisoners were transformed into suffering. At first the queen thought she could not bear it, and the promenades were given up. But the pale cheeks of her daughter, the longing looks which the dauphin cast from the closed window to the garden, warned the *mother* to do what the *queen* found too severe a task. She underwent the pain involved in this, she submitted herself, and every day the royal pair took the dear children into the garden again, and bore this unworthy treatment without complaint, that the children might enjoy a little air and sunshine.

One day, the 21st of September, the royal family had returned from their walk to their sitting-room. The king had taken a book and was reading; the queen was sitting near him, engaged in some light work; while the dauphin, with his sister Theresa, and his aunt Elizabeth, were in the next room, and were busying each other with riddles. In the open anteroom the two officials were sitting, their eyes fixed upon the prisoners with a kind of cruel pleasure.

Suddenly beneath their windows were heard the loud blast of trumpets and the rattle of drums; then followed a deep silence, and amid this stillness the following proclamation was read with a loud voice:

"The monarchy is abolished in France. All official documents will be dated from the first year of the republic. The national seal will be encircled by the words, 'Republic of France.' The national coat-of-arms will be a woman sitting upon a bundle of weapons, and holding in her hand a lance tipped with a liberty-cap."

The two officials had fixed their eyes upon the king and queen, from whose heads the crown had just fallen. They wanted to read, with their crafty and malicious eyes, the impression which the proclamation had made upon them. But those proud, calm features disclosed nothing. Not for a moment did the king raise his eyes from the book which he was reading, while the voice without uttered each word with fearful distinctness. The queen quietly went on with her embroidery, and not for a moment did she intermit the regular motion of her needle.

Again the blast of trumpets and the rattle of drums. The funeral of the royalty was ended, and the king was, after this time, to be known simply as Louis Capet, and the queen as Marie Antoinette. Within the Temple there was no longer a dauphin, no longer a Madame Royale, no longer a princess, but only the Capet family!

The republic had hurled the crowns from the heads of Louis and Marie Antoinette; and when, some days later, the linen which had been long begged for, had been brought from the Tuileries, the republic commanded the queen to obliterate the crown which marked each piece, in addition to the name.

But their sufferings are by no means ended yet. Still there are some sources of comfort left, and now and then a peaceful hour. The crowns have fallen, but hearts still beat side by side. They have no longer a kingdom, but they are together, they can speak with looks one to another, they can seek to comfort one another with smiles, they can cheer each other up with a passing grasp of the hand, that escapes the eye of the sentries! We only suffer half what we bear in common with others, and every thing seems lighter, when there is a second one to help lift the load.

Perhaps the enemies of the king and queen have an instinctive feeling of this, and their hate makes them sympathetic, in order to teach them to invent new tortures and new sufferings.

Yes, there are unknown pangs still to be felt; their cup of sorrows was not yet full! The parents are still left to each other, and their eyes are still allowed to rest upon their children! But the "one and indivisible republic" means to rend even these bonds which bind the royal family together, and to part those who have sworn that nothing shall separate them but death! The republic—which had abolished the churches, overthrown the altars, driven the priesthood into exile—the republic cannot grant to the Capet family that only death shall separate them, for it had even made Death its servant, and must accept daily victims from him, offered on the Place de Liberté, in the centre of which stood the guillotine, the only altar tolerated there.

In the middle of October the republic sent its emissaries to the Temple, to tear the king from the arms of his wife and his children. In spite of their pleadings and cries, he was taken to another part of the Temple—to the great tower, which from this time was to serve as his lodgings. And in order that the queen might be spared no pang, the dauphin was compelled to go with his father and be separated from his mother.

This broke the pride, the royal pride of Marie Antoinette. She wrung her hands, she wept, she cried, she implored with such moving, melting tones, not to be separated from her son and husband, that even the heart of Simon the cobbler was touched.

"I really believe that these cursed women make me blubber!" cried he, angry with the tears which forced themselves into his eyes. And he made no objection when the other officials said to the queen, with trembling voices, that they would allow the royal family to come together at their meals.

One last comfort, one last ray of sunshine! There were still hours in these dismal, monotonous days of November, when they could have some happiness—hours for which they longed, and for whose sake they bore the desolate solitude of the remaining time.

At breakfast, dinner, and supper, the Capet family were together; words were interchanged, hands could rest in one another, and they could delight in the pleasant chatter of the dauphin when the king told about the lessons he had given the boy, and the progress he was making. They sometimes forgot, at those meetings, that Death was perhaps crouching outside the Temple, waiting to receive his victims; and they even uttered little words of pleasantry, to awaken the bright, fresh laugh of the dauphin, the only music that ever was heard in those dismal rooms.

But December took this last consolation from the queen. The National Assembly, which had now been transformed into the Convention, brought the charge of treason against the king. He was accused of entering into a secret alliance with the enemies of France, and calling the monarchs of Europe to come to his assistance. In an iron safe which had been set into the wall of the cabinet in the Tuileries, papers had been discovered which compromised the king, letters from the refugee princes, from the Emperor of Germany, and the King of Prussia. These monarchs were now on the very confines of France, ready to enter upon a bloody war, and that was the fault of the king! He was in alliance with the enemies of his country! He was the murderer of his own subjects! On his head the blood should return, which had been shed by him.

This was the charge which was brought against the king. Twenty members of the Convention went to the Temple, to read it to him, and to hear his reply.

He stoutly denied having entertained such relations with foreign princes; he declared, with a solemn oath, that he had declined all overtures from such quarters, because he had seen that, in order to free an imprisoned king, France itself must be threatened.

The chiefs of the revolution meant to find him guilty. Louis Capet must be put out of the way, in order that Robespierre and Marat, Danton, Pétion, and their friends, might reach unlimited power.

There may have been several in the Convention who shrank from this last consequence of their doings, but they did not venture to raise their voices; they chimed in with the terrorism which the leaders of the revolution exercised upon the Convention. They knew that behind these leaders stood the savage masses of the streets, armed with hatred against monarchy and the aristocracy, and ready to tear in pieces any one as an enemy of the country who ventured to join the number of those who were under the ban and the sentence of the popular hate.

Still there were some courageous, faithful servants of the king who ventured to take his part even there. Louis had now been summoned to the bar as an accused person, and the Convention had transformed itself into a tribunal whose function was to pass judgment on the guilt or innocence of the king!

In order to satisfy all the forms of the law, the king should have had an advocate allowed him, and the benefit of legal counsel. The Convention demanded that those who were ready to undertake this task should send in their names. It was a form deemed safe to abide by, because it was believed that there would be no one who would venture to enter upon so momentous and perilous a duty.

But there were such, nevertheless. There were still courageous and noble men who pitied the forsaken king, and who wanted to try to save him; not willing to see him atone for the debts of his predecessors, and bleed for the sins of his fathers. And scarcely had the consent of the Convention been announced, that Louis Capet should have three advocates for his defence, when from Paris and all the minor cities letters came in from men who declared themselves ready to undertake the defence of the king.

Even from foreign lands there came letters and appeals in behalf of the deposed monarch. One of them, written in spirited and glowing language, conjured France not to soil its noble young freedom by the dreadful murder of an innocent man, who had committed no other offence than that he was the son of his fathers, the heir of their crown and their remissness. It was written by a German poet, Frederick Schiller.*

From the many requests to serve as his advocates, Louis chose only two to defend him. The first of these was his former minister, the philosopher Lamoignon des Malesherbes, then the advocate Trouchet, and finally, at the pressing request of Malesherbes, the distinguished young advocate Desêges. To those three men was committed the trust of defending the king against the dreadful charge of treason to his country, to be substantiated by hundreds and hundreds of letters and documents.

After the preliminary investigations were closed, the public charge was made in the Convention, which still held its sessions in the Manêge. To this building, situated near the Tuileries, the king, accompanied by his three defenders and two municipal defenders, and surrounded by National Guards, was conducted from the Temple. The people danced around the carriage with wild shouts of joy and curses of the king. Within the vehicle sat Louis, completely calm and self-possessed.

"This man must be filled with a singular fanaticism," said Colombeau, one of the leading officials, in the report which he gave to the Convention of the ride. "It is otherwise inexplicable how Louis could be so calm, since he had so much reason to fear. After we had all entered the carriage, and were driving through the streets, Louis entered upon conversation, which soon turned upon literature, and especially upon some Latin authors. He gave his judgments with remarkable correctness and insight, and it appeared to me that he took pleasure in showing his learning. One of us said that he did not enjoy Seneca, because his love for riches stood in marked contrast with his pretended philosophy, and because it could not easily be forgiven him that before the senate he apologized for the crimes of Nero. This reflection did not seem to affect Louis in the least. When we spoke of Livy, Capet said that he seemed to have taken satisfaction in composing great speeches which were never uttered to any other audience than that which was reached from his study-table; 'for,' he added, 'it is impossible that generals really delivered such long speeches in front of their armies.' He then compared Livy with Tacitus, and thought that the latter was far superior to the former in point of style." * The king went on talking about Latin authors while the carriage was carrying him through the roaring mob to the Convention, which Desêge addressed in his defence in these courageous words: "I look for judges among you, but see only accusers."

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* Schiller's defence of the king is preserved in the national archives.—See Beauchesne, vol. i., p. 365.

The king was completely calm, yet he knew that his life was threatened, and that he was standing before a tribunal of death. As on the day when he was first taken to the Convention, he requested Malesherbes to forward a note to the priest whose attendance he desired, and who he believed would not deny his presence and attentions. His name was Edgewarth de Firmont. The time was not distant when not the services of advocates were wanted by the king, but exclusively those of the priest.

The sentence of death was pronounced on January 26, 1793. Louis received it calmly, and desired merely to see his family, to have a confessor come to him, and to prepare himself for his death.

During these dreadful weeks Marie Antoinette was separated from her husband, alone with her children, who no longer were able to smile, but who sat day after day with fixed eyes and silent lips. The queen knew that the king had been accused, had made a private reply to the charges brought against him, and had been brought before the Convention. But not a word, not a syllable of the trial which followed, reached her. Madame Tison, the female dragon who guarded her, watched her too well for any tidings to reach her.

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* See Beauchesne, vol. i., p. 396.

At last, however, the word was brought which the heart of the queen had so long anticipated tremblingly, for which she had prepared herself during the long nights with tears and prayers, and which now filled her with grief, anger, and despair. The king was condemned to death! He wanted only to see his family, to take his leave of them!

The Convention had granted this privilege to him, and had even gone so far in its grace as to permit the family to be without the presence of witnesses. The meeting was appointed, however, in the little dining-room of the king, because a glass door led into the adjoining room, and the officials could then look in upon the royal family. The functionary had withdrawn in order to conduct the queen, the children, and the king's sister from the upper tower. The king was awaiting them, walked disquietly up and down, and then directed Clery, who was arranging the little room, to set the round table, which was in the middle of the apartment, on one side, and then to bring in a *carafe* of water and some glasses. "But," he added, considerately, "not ice-water, for the queen cannot bear it, and she might be made unwell by it."

But all at once the king grew pale, and, standing still, he laid his hand upon his loudly-beating heart. He had heard the voice of the queen.

The door opened and they came in—all his dear ones. The queen led the dauphin by the hand; Madame Elizabeth walked with the Princess Theresa.

The king went toward them and opened his arms to them. They all pressed up to him and clasped him in their midst, while loud sobs and heart-rending cries filled the room. Behind the door were the officials, but they could not look in upon the scene, for their own eyes were filled with tears. In the king's cabinet, not far away, the Abbé Edgewarth de Firmont was upon his knees, praying for the unfortunates whose wails and groans reached even him.

Gradually the sobs died away. They took their places—the queen at the left of her husband; Madame Elizabeth, his sister, at his right; opposite to him, his daughter, Maria Theresa, and between his knees the dauphin, looking up into his father's face with widely-opened eyes and a sad smile.

Louis was the first to speak. He told them of his trial, and of the charges which they had brought against him. But his words were gentle and calm, and he expressed his pity for the "poor, misled men" who had condemned him. He asked his family, too, to forgive them. They answered him only with sobs, embraces, tears, and kisses.

Then all was still. The officials heard not a word, but they saw the queen, with her children and sister-in-law, sink upon their knees, while the king, standing erect in the midst of the group, raised his hands and blessed them in gentle, noble words, which touched the heart of the Abbé Edgewarth, who was kneeling behind the door of the neighboring cabinet.

The king then bade the family rise, took them again in his arms, and kissed the queen, who, pale and trembling, clung to him, and whose quivering lips were not able to restrain a word of denunciation of those who had condemned him.

"I have forgiven them," said the king, seriously. "I have written my will, and in it you will read that I pardon them, and that I ask you to do the same. Promise me, Marie, that you will never think how you may avenge my death."

A smile full of sadness and despair flitted over the pale lips of the queen.

"I shall never be in a situation to take vengeance upon them," she said. "But," she added quickly, "even if I should ever be able, and the power should be in my hands, I promise that I will exact no vengeance for this deed."

The king stooped down and imprinted a kiss upon her forehead.

"I thank you, Marie, and I know that you all, my dear ones, will sacredly regard my last testament, and that my wishes and words will be engraven on your hearts. But, my son"—and he took the dauphin upon his knee, and looked down into his face tenderly—"you are still a child, and might forget. You have heard what I have said, but as an oath is more sacred than a word, raise your hand and swear to me you will fulfil my wish and forgive all our enemies."

The boy, turning his great blue eyes fixedly on the king, and his lips trembling with emotion, raised his right hand, and even the officials in the next room could distinctly hear the sweet child's voice repeating the words: "I swear to you, papa king, that I will forgive all our enemies, and will do no harm to those who are going to kill my dear father!"

A shudder passed through the hearts of the men in the next room; they drew back from the door with pale faces. It seemed to them as if they had heard the voice of an angel, and a feeling of inexpressible pain and regret passed through their souls.

Within the king's room all now was still, and the abbé in the cabinet heard only the gentle murmuring of their prayers, and the suppressed weeping and sobs.

At last the king spoke. "Now, go, my dear ones. I must be alone. I need to rest and collect myself."

A loud wail was the answer. After some minutes, Clery opened the glass door, and the royal family were brought into the view of the officials once more. The queen was clinging to the right arm of Louis; they each gave a hand to the dauphin. Theresa had flung her arms around the king's body, his sister Elizabeth clung to his left arm. They thus moved forward a few steps toward the door, amid loud cries of grief and heart-breaking sobs.

"I promise you," said Louis, "to see you once more to-morrow morning, at eight o'clock."

"At eight! Why not at seven?" asked the queen, with a foreboding tone.

"Well, then," answered the king, gently, "at seven. Farewell, farewell!"

The depth of sadness in his utterance with which he spoke the last parting word, doubled the tears and sobs of the weeping family. The daughter fell in a swoon at the feet of her father, and Clery, assisted by the Princess Elizabeth, raised her up.

"Papa, my dear papa," cried the dauphin, nestling up closely to his father, "let us stay with you."

The queen said not a word. With pale face and with widely-opened eyes she looked fixedly at the king, as though she wanted to impress his countenance on her heart.

"Farewell, farewell!" cried the king, once more, and he turned quickly around and hurried into the next room.

A single cry of grief and horror issued from all lips. The two children, soon to be orphans, then clung closely to their mother, who threw herself, overmastered by her sobbing, on the neck of her sister-in-law.

"Forward! The Capet family will return to their own apartments!" cried one of the officials.

Marie Antoinette raised herself up, her eye flashed, and with a voice full of anger, she cried: "You are hangmen and traitors!" *

The king had withdrawn to his cabinet, where the priest, Abbé Edgewarth de Firmont, addressed him with comforting words. His earnest request had been granted, to give the king the sacrament before his death. The service was to take place very early the next morning, so ran the decision of the authorities, and at seven the king was to be taken to execution.

Louis received the first part of this communication joyfully, the second part with complete calmness.

"As I must rise so early," he said to his valet Clery, "I must retire early. This day has been a very trying one for me, and I need rest, so as not to be weak to-morrow." He was then undressed by the servant, and lay down. When Clery came at five the next morning to dress him, he found the king still asleep, and they must have been pleasant dreams which were passing before him, for a smile was playing on his lips.

The king was dressed, and the priest gave him the sacrament, the vessels used having been taken from the neighboring Capuchin church of Marais. An old chest of drawers was converted by Clery into an altar, two ordinary candlesticks stood on each side of the cup, and in them two tallow candles burned, instead of wax. Before this altar kneeled King Louis XVI., lost in thought and prayer, and wearing a calm, peaceful face.

The priest read the mass; Clery responded as sacristan; and even while the king was receiving the elements, the sound of the drums and trumpets was heard without, which awakened Paris that morning and told the city that the

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* Beauchesne, vol. i., p. 449.

King of France was being led to his execution. Cannon were rattling through the streets, and National Guardsmen were hurrying on foot and on horse along the whole of the way that led from the Temple to the Place de la Concorde. A rank of men, four deep and standing close to one another, armed with pikes and other weapons, guarded both sides of the street, and made it impossible for those who wanted to liberate the king during the ride, to come near to him. The authorities knew that one of the bravest and most determined partisans of the king had arrived in Paris, and that he, in conjunction with a number of young and brave-spirited men, had resolved on rescuing the king at any cost, during his ride to the place of execution. The utmost precautions had been taken to render this impossible. Through the dense ranks of the National Guard, which to-day was composed of mere *sans-culottes*, the raging, bloodthirsty men of the suburbs drove the carriage in which was the king, followed and escorted by National Guardsmen on horseback. The windows were all closed and the curtains drawn in the houses by which the procession passed; but behind those curtained windows it is probable that people were upon their knees praying for the unhappy man who was now on his way to the scaffold, and who was once King of France.

All at once there arose a movement in this dreadful hedge of armed men, through which the carriage was passing. Two young men cried: "To us, Frenchmen—to us, all who want to save the king!"

But the cry found no response. Every one looked horrified at his neighbor, and believed he saw in him a spy or a murderer; fear benumbed all their souls, and the silence of death reigned around.

The two young men wanted to flee, to escape into a house close by. But the door was closed, and before the very door they were cut down and hewn in pieces by the exasperated *sans-culottes*.

The carriage of the king rolled on, and Louis paid no more attention to objects around him; in the prayer-book which he carried in his hands he read the petitions for the dying, and the abbé prayed with him.

The coachman halted at the foot of the scaffold, and the king dismounted. A forest of pikes surrounded the spot. The drummers beat loudly, but the king cried with a loud voice, "Silence!" and the noise ceased. On that, Santerre sprang forward and commanded them to commence beating their drums again, and they obeyed him. The king took off his upper garments, and the executioners approached to cut off his hair. He quietly let this be done, but when they wanted to tie his hands, his eyes flashed with anger, and with a firm voice he refused to allow them to do so.

"Sire," said the priest, "I see in this new insult only a fresh point of resemblance between your majesty and our Saviour, who will be your recompense and your strength."

Louis raised his eyes to heaven with an indescribable expression of grief and resignation. "Truly," he said, "only my recollection of Him and His example can enable me to endure this new degradation."

He gave his hands to the executioner, to let them be bound. Then resting on the arm of the abbé, he ascended the steps of the scaffold. The twenty drummers, who stood around the staging, beat their drums; but the king, advancing to the very verge of the scaffold, commanded them with a loud voice to be silent, and the noise ceased.

In a tone which was audible across the whole square, and which made every word intelligible, the king said: "I die innocent of all the charges which are brought against me. I forgive those who have caused my death, and I pray God that the blood which you spill this day may never come back upon the head of France. And you, unhappy people—"

"Do not let him go on talking this way," cried Santerre's commanding voice, interrupting the king; then turning to Louis he said, in an angry tone, "I brought you here not to make speeches, but to die!"

The drums beat, the executioners seized the king and bent him down. The priest stooped over him and murmured some words which only God heard, but which a tradition full of admiration and sympathy has transposed into the immortal and popular formula which is truer than truth and more historical than history: "Son of St. Louis, ascend to Heaven!"

The drums beat, a glistening object passed through the air, a stroke was heard, and blood spirted up. The King of France was dead, and Samson the executioner lifted up the head, which had once borne a crown, to show it to the people.

A dreadful silence followed for an instant; then the populace broke in masses through the rows of soldiers, and rushed to the scaffold, in order to bear away some remembrances of this ever-memorable event. The clothes of the king were torn to rags and distributed, and they even gave the executioner some gold in exchange for locks of hair from the bleeding head. An Englishman gave a child fifteen louis d'or for dipping his handkerchief in the blood which flowed from the scaffold. Another paid thirty louis d'or for the peruke of the king.*

On the evening of the same day, the executioner Samson, shocked at the terrible deed which he had done, went to a priest, paid for masses to be said for the repose of the king, then laid down his office, retired into solitude, and died in six months. His son was his successor in his ghostly office, and, in a pious manner, he continued what his father began. The masses for the king, instituted by the two Samsons, continued to be read till the year 1840.†

On the morrow which followed this dreadful day, the "Widow Capet" requested the authorities to provide for herself and her family a suite of mourning of the simplest kind.

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*These details I take from the "Vossische Zeitung," which, in its issue of the 5th of February, 1793, contains a full report of the execution of King Louis XVI., and also announces that the court of Prussia will testify its grief at the unmerited fate by wearing mourning for a period of four weeks. The author of this work possesses a copy of the "Vossische Zeitung" of that date, in small quarto form, printed on thick, gray paper. In the same number of the journal is a fable by Hermann Pfeffel, which runs in the following strain:

FIRST MORAL, THEN POLITICAL FREEDOM.

A FABLE, BY HERMANN PFEFFEL.

ZEUS AND THE TIGERS.

To Zeus there came one day
A deputation of tigers. "Mighty potentate,"
Thus spoke their Cicero before the monarch's throne,
"The noble nation of tigers,
Has long been wearied with the lion's choice as king.
Does not Nature give us an equal claim with his?
Therefore, O Zeus, declare my race
To be a people of free citizens!"
"No," said the god of gods, "it cannot be;
You are deceivers, thieves, and murderers,
Only a good people merits being free."

†"Marie Antoinette et sa Famille," par Lescure, p. 648.

The republic was magnanimous enough to comply with this request.

CHAPTER XXI.

TOULAN.

THE citizen Toulan is on guard again at the Temple, and this time with his friend Lepitre. He is so trustworthy and blameless a republican, and so zealous a citizen, that the republic gives him unconditional confidence. The republic had appointed him as chief of the bureau for the control of the effects of *émigrés.* Toulan is, besides, a member of the Convention; and it is not his fault that, on the day when the decision was made respecting the king's life or death, he was not in the Assembly. He had been compelled at that time to make a journey into the provinces, to attach the property of an aristocrat who had emigrated. Had Toulan been in Paris, he would naturally have given his voice in favor of the execution of the king. He says this freely and openly to every one, and every one believes him, for Toulan is an entirely unsuspected republican. He belongs to the *sans-culottes*, and takes pride in not being dressed better than the meanest citizen. He belongs to the friends of Marat, and Simon the cobbler is always happy when Toulan has the watch in the Temple; for Toulan is such a jovial, merry fellow, he can make such capital jokes and laugh so heartily at those of others. They have such fine times when Toulan is there, and the sport is the greatest when his friend Lepitre is with him on service in the Temple. Then the two have the grandest sport of all; they even have little plays, which are so funny that Simon has to laugh outright, and even the turnkey Tison, and his wife, forget to keep guard, and leave the glass door through which they have been watching the royal family, in order to be spectators at Toulan's little farces.

"These are jolly days when you are both in the Temple," said Simon, "and you cannot blame me if I like to have you here, and put you on service pretty often."

"Oh, we do not blame you for that," said Toulan, "on the other hand, we particularly like being with you, you are such a splendid fellow!"

"And then," adds Lepitre to this, "it is so pleasant to see the proud she-wolf and her young ones, and to set them down a little. These people, when they were living in the Tuileries, have turned up their noses at us often enough, and acted as if we were only dust that they must blow away from their exalted presence. It is time that they should feel a little that they are only dust for us to blow away!"

"Yes, indeed," chimed in Toulan, "it is high time that they should feel it!"

"And you both understood that matter capitally," said Simon, with a laugh, "I always see that it particularly provokes the queen to have you on service, and I like that, and I am especially glad to have you here."

"I've thought out a joke for to-day," said Toulan. "I will teach the widow to smoke. You know, brother Simon, that she always pretends not to be able to bear the smell of tobacco, she shall learn to bear it. I will hand her a paper cigarette to-day, and tell her that if she does not want us to smoke, she must smoke with us."

"Splendid joke!" said Simon, with a loud laugh.

"But there's one thing to be thought of about that," said Lepitre, reflectively. "The widow Capet might perhaps promise to smoke, if we would tell her that we would never smoke afterward. But then we should not keep our word, of course."

"What! you say we should not keep our word!" said Toulan, in amazement. "We are republicans; more than that, we are *sans-culottes!* and shall we not keep our word? ought we not to be better than the cursed aristocrats, that never kept their word to the people? How can you disgrace us and yourself so much? Ask our noble friend and brother Simon, whether he is of the opinion that a free man ought not to keep his word, even if he has only given it to a woman in prison."

"I am of that opinion," said Simon, with dignity. "I swore to myself that the king should lose his head, and I kept my word. I promised the she-wolf that she should be hanged, and I hope to keep this promise too. If I keep my word to her in what is bad, I must do so also in what is good. If a republican promises any thing, he must hold to it."

"Right, Simon, you are a noble and wise man. It remains fixed, then, that the queen shall smoke, but if we have our joke out, we shall not smoke any more."

"I will put up a placard on the door: 'Smoking forbidden in the anteroom of the she-wolf.'"

"Good," cried Toulan, "that is worthy of you."

"Let us go up now," said Simon, "the two other sentries are up-stairs already, they will wonder that you come so late, but I do like to chat with you. Come on, let's go up. I'll stay there to see the joke. But wait a moment, there is something new. It has been proposed that not so many guards are needed to watch the Capets, and that it has the appearance as if the government was afraid of these howling women and this little monkey, whom the crazy royalists call King Louis XVII. It is very likely that they will reduce the guard to two."

"Very good," said Toulan, approvingly.—"What's the use of wearying out so many other men and condemning them to such idleness? We cannot be making jokes all the time; and then again it is not pleasant always looking on these people's long faces."

"So only two guards," said Lepitre; "but that seems to me rather too few, for what if the widow should succeed in winning them over and getting them to help her escape?"

"Impossible!" cried Simon, "she'll never come around me, and as long as I have my eyes open, she and her brood will never get away. No one can come down the staircase without my hearing and seeing it, for you know my rooms are near the stairs, and the door is always open and I am always there, and then there is the turnkey Ricard, who watches the door that leads to the court like a cerberus. Then there are three sentries at the doors leading from the inner court to the outer one, and the four sentries at the doors leading from the outer court to the street. No, no, my friends, if the she-wolf wants to escape she must use magic, and make wings grow on her shoulders and fly away."

"That is good, I like that," said Toulan, springing up the staircase.

"And that settles my doubts too," said Lepitre. "I should think two official guards would suffice, for it is plain that she cannot escape. Simon is on the look-out, and it is plain that the she-wolf cannot transform herself into an eagle."

"Well said," laughed Simon; "here we are before the door, let's go in and have our fun."

He dashed the door open noisily, and went into the room with the two men. Two officials were sitting in the middle of the room at the table, and were actively engaged playing cards. Through the open door you could look into the sitting-room of the Capet family. The queen was sitting on the divan behind the round table, clothed in her sad suit of mourning, with a black cap upon her gray locks.

She was busy in dictating an exercise to the dauphin from a book which she held in her hand. The prince, also clad in black and with a broad crape about his arm, sat upon a chair by her side. His whole attention was directed to his work, and he was visibly making an effort to write as well as possible, for a glowing red suffused his cheeks.

On the other side of the queen sat Madame Elizabeth; near her the Princess Maria Theresa, both busy in preparing some clothing for the queen.

No one of the group appeared to notice the loud opening of the door, no one observed the entering forms, or cast even a momentary glance at them.

But Toulan was not contented with this; he demanded nothing less than that the she-wolf should look at him. He hurried through the anteroom with a threatening tread, advanced to the door of the sitting-room, and stopped upon the threshold, making such a deep and ceremonious bow, and swinging his arm so comically, that Simon was compelled to laugh aloud.

"Madame," cried Toulan, "I have the inexpressible honor of greeting your grace."

"He is a brick. a perfect brick," roared Simon.

Lepitre had gone to the window, and turned his back upon the room; he was perhaps too deficient in spirit to join in the joke. Nobody paid any attention to him; nobody saw him take a little packet from his coat-pocket, and slide it slowly and carefully behind the wooden box that stood beneath the window.

"Madame," cried Toulan, in a still louder voice, "I fear your grace has not heard my salutation."

The queen slowly raised her eyes, and turned them to the man who was still standing upon the threshold. "I heard it," she said, coldly, "go on writing, my son." And she went on in the sentence that she had just then begun to dictate.

"I am so happy at being heard by Madame Veto that I shall have to celebrate it by a little bonfire!" said Toulan, taking a cigar from his breast-pocket. "You see, my friends, that I am a very good courtier, though I have the honor to be a *sans-culottes.* In the presence of handsome ladies I only smoke cigars! Hallo! bring me a little fire."

One of the officials silently passed him his long pipe. Toulan lighted his cigar, placed himself at the threshold, and blew great clouds of smoke into the chamber.

The ladies still continued to sit quietly without paying any attention to Toulan. The queen dictated, and the dauphin wrote. The queen only interrupted herself in this occupation, when she had to cough and wipe her eyes, which the smoke filled with tears.

Toulan had followed every one of her movements with an amused look. "Madame does not appear to take any pleasure in my bonfire!" he said. "Will madame not smoke?"

The queen made no reply, but quietly went on with her dictation.

"Madame," cried Toulan, laughing loudly, "I should like to smoke a pipe of peace with you, as our brown brethren in happy, free America do—madame, I beg you to do me the honor to smoke a pipe of peace with me."

A flash lightened in the eyes which the queen now directed to Toulan. "You are a shameless fellow!" she said.

"Hear that," said Simon, "that is what I call abusing you."

"On the contrary, it delights me," cried Toulan, "for you will confess that it would be jolly if she should smoke now, and I tell you, she will smoke."

He advanced some paces into the room, and made his deep bow again.

"He understands manners as well as if he had been a rascally courtier himself," said Simon, laughing. "It is a splendid joke."

The two princesses had arisen at the entrance of Toulan, and laid their sewing-work aside. A ball of white cotton had fallen to the ground from the lap of one of them, and rolled through the room toward Toulan.

He picked it up, and bowed to the princesses. "May I view this little globe," he said, "as a reminder of the favor of the loveliest ladies of France? Oh, yes, I see in your roguish smile that I may, and I thank you," said Toulan, pressing the round ball to his lips, and then putting it into his breast-pocket.

"He plays as well as the fellows do in the theatre," said Simon, laughing.

"Go into our sleeping-room," said Marie Antoinette, turning to the princesses. "It is enough for me to have to bear these indignities—go, my son, accompany your aunt."

The dauphin stood up, pressed a kiss upon the hand of his mother, and followed the two princesses, who had gone into the adjoining apartment.

"Dear aunt," whispered the dauphin, "is this bad man the good friend who—"

"Hush!" whispered Madame Elizabeth, "hush! Madame Tison is listening."

And, in fact, at the glass-door, which led from the sleeping-room to the little corridor, stood Madame Tison, looking with sharp, searching glances into the chamber.

After the princesses had left the room, Toulan approached still closer to the queen, and taking a cigar from his breast-pocket, he handed it to the queen. "Take it, madame," he said, "and do me the honor of smoking a duet with me!"

"I do not smoke, sir," replied the queen, coolly and calmly. "I beg you to go into the anteroom. The Convention has not, so far as I understand, ordered the officers of the guard to tarry in my sitting-room."

"The Convention has not ordered it, nor has it forbidden it. So I remain!"

He took a chair, seated himself in the middle of the room, and rolled out great clouds of smoke, which filled Simon with unspeakable delight when they compelled Marie Antoinette to cough violently.

"Madame Capet, you would not be so sensitive to smoke if you would only join me. I beg you, therefore, to take this cigar."

The queen repeated calmly, "I do not smoke."

"You mistake, madame, you do smoke."

"See the jolly fellow," exclaimed Simon, "that is splendid."

"I will show you at once that you do smoke," continued Toulan. "Madame, if you will do me the honor to join me in smoking a cigar, I will give you my word as a republican and a *sans-culottes*, that neither I nor my brothers will ever smoke here again."

"I do not believe you," said the queen, shaking her head.

"Not believe me? Would you believe it if the citizen Simon were to repeat it?"

"Yes," said the queen, fixing her great, sad eyes upon Simon, "if the citizen Simon should confirm it, I would believe it, for he is a trustworthy man, who I believe never breaks his word."

"Oh! only see how well the Austrian understands our noble brother Simon," cried Lepitre.

"Yes, truly, it seems so," said Simon, who had been flattered by this praise to consent to what he had no inclination for. "Well, I give my word to Widow Capet, as a republican and a *sans-culottes*, that there shall be no smoking in the anteroom after this time, if she will do my friend Toulan the favor of smoking a pipe of peace with him."

"I believe your word," said the queen, with a gentle inclination of her head; and then turning to Toulan, she continued, "sir—"

"There are no 'sirs' here, only 'citizens,'" interrupted the cobbler.

"Citizen Toulan," said the queen, changing her expression," give me the cigar, I see that I was wrong, I do smoke!"

Simon cried aloud with laughter and delight, and could scarcely control himself, when, kneeling before the queen, as the players do in the grand plays at the theatre, he handed her a cigar.

But he did not see the supplicatory look which Toulan fixed upon the queen; he did not see the tears which started into his eyes, nor hear her say, during his inordinate peals of laughter, "I thank you, my faithful one!"

"Is it enough if I take the cigar in my mouth, or must I burn it?" asked the queen.

"Certainly, she must burn it," cried Simon. "Light the cigar for her, Citizen Toulan."

Toulan drew a bit of paper from his pocket, folded it together, kindled it, and gave it to the queen. Then, as soon as the dry cigar began to burn, he put out the light, and threw it carelessly upon the table.

The queen put the little smoking cigarette into her mouth. "Bravo, bravo!" shouted the officials and Simon. "Bravo, Citizen Toulan is a pefrect brick! He has taught Widow Capet how to smoke."

"I told you I would," said Toulan, proudly. "Widow Capet has had to comply with our will, and that is enough. You need not go on, madame. You have acknowledged our power, and that is all we wanted. That is enough, Simon, is it not? She does not need to smoke any longer, and we, too, must stop."

"No, she does not need to smoke any longer, and there will be no more smoking in the antechamber."

The queen took the paper cigarette from her mouth, put out the burning end, and laid the remaining portion in her work-basket.

"Citizen Toulan," said she, "I will keep this cigar as a remembrancer of this hour, and if you ever smoke here again, I shall show it to you."

"I should like to see this Austrian woman doubting the word of a *sans-culottes*," cried Simon.

"And I too, Simon," replied Toulan, going back into the anteroom. "We will teach her that she must trust our word. You see that I am a good teacher."

"An excellent one," cried Simon; "I must compliment you on it, citizen. But if you have no objections, we will play a game or two of cards with the citizens here."

"All right," replied Toulan. "But I hope you have got the new kind of cards, which have no kings and queens on them. For, I tell you, I do not play with the villanous old kind."

"Nor I," chimed in Lepitre. "It makes me mad to see the old stupids with their crowns on that are on the old kind of cards."

"You are a pair of out-and-out republicans," said Simon, admiringly. "Truly, one might learn of you how a *sans-culottes* ought to bear himself."

"Well, you can calm yourselves about these, brothers," said one of the officials; "we have no tyrant-cards—we have the new cards of the republic. See there! instead of the king, there is a *sans-culottes;* instead of the queen, we have a 'knitter,' * and for the jack, we have a Swiss soldier, for they were the menials of the old monarchy." †

"That is good; well, we will play then," cried Toulan, with an air of good-humor.

They all took their places at the table, while the queen took up the sewing on which the princesses had been engaged before.

After some time, when the thread with which she was sewing was exhausted, Marie Antoinette raised her eyes and turned them to the men, who had laid their pipes aside, and were zealously engaged upon their cards. The mien of the queen was no longer so calm and rigidly composed as it had been before, and when she spoke, there was a slight quivering discernible in her voice.

"Citizen Toulan," she said, "I beg you to give me the ball of thread again. I have no more, and this dress is in a wretched condition; I must mend it."

Toulan turned toward her with a gesture of impatience.

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* The market-women and hucksters had the privilege of claiming the first seats on the spectators' platform, near the guillotine. They sat there during the executions, knitting busily on long stockings, while looking at the bloody drama before them. Every time that a head was cut off and dropped into the basket beneath the knife, the women made a mark in their knitting-work, and thus converted their stockings into a kind of calendar, which recorded the number of persons executed. From this circumstance the market women received the name of "knitters."

† Historical.—See "Mémoires de la Marquise de Crequi," vol. iii.

"You disturb me, madame, and put me out in the game. What are you saying?"

"I asked you, Citizen Toulan, to give me the thread again, because, without it, I cannot work."

"Oh! the ball which little Miss Capet gave me a short time ago. And so you won't let me keep a remembrance of the pretty girl?"

"I must mend this dress," said the queen, gently.

"Well, if you must, you must," growled Toulan, rising. "Wait a moment, brothers, till I carry her the ball."

"What do you want to get up for?" asked Simon. "You can throw it from here."

"Or give it a roll like a ball," added Lepitre.

"That is a good idea," cried Toulan, "I'll have a little game of nine-pins. I am quite at home there, and can do it well. Now look sharp! I will contrive to roll the ball between the four feet of the table, and strike the foot of the queen."

"There is no queen," cried Lepitre, passionately.

"I am speaking of the game, Citizen Lepitre; do me the pleasure of not making yourself an ass. Now look, and see me roll it as I said!"

"Well, go ahead; we should like to see you do it," cried Simon.

"Yes, we would like to see you do it," chimed in the officials, laying down their cards.

Toulan now drew out of his breast-pocket a black ball of silk, and counted "One, two, three!" He then gave it a skilful roll across the floor. With attention and laughing looks, they all watched it take its course across the waxed floor, as it moved just where Toulan had said it would.

"Bravo, bravo!" shouted the men, as the ball struck the foot of the queen, who stooped down slowly and picked it up.

"Toulan is a jolly good fellow," cried Simon, striking the table with his fists in an ecstasy of delight. "But I declare it seems to me that the ball is a good deal larger now than it was before."

"It may be," answered Toulan, emphatically. "Every thing grows and enlarges itself, that a true and genuine *sans-culottes* carries next to his heart."

"Well said," replied Lepitre. "But listen to me, I want to make a proposition to you. I must say that it is hard work—playing cards without smoking."

"I find it so, too," sighed Toulan.

"I rather think we all do," chimed in the others.

"But we must keep our word, or else the she-wolf will think that we republicans are no better than the aristocrats were!"

"Yes, we must keep our word," said Lepitre, "and that is why I wanted to make the proposition that we go out and establish ourselves in the entry. We can put the table close to the door, and then we are certainly safe—that no one can step in. What do you say, brother Simon?"

"I say that it is a very good plan, and that we will carry it into execution directly. Come, friends, let us take up the table, and carry it out. If the dogs are on the watch outside, the badger does not creep out of his house. Come, it is much pleasanter out there, and we are not ambitious of the honor of looking at Widow Capet all the time. We are perfectly satisfied, if we do not see her. I hope there will be an end of this tedious service, and that she will soon go to the place whither Louis Capet has already gone."

"Or," cried Toulan, laughing, "she must change herself into an eagle, and fly out of the window. Come, brothers, I long for my pipe. Let us carry the table out into the entry."

Simon opened the door that led out upon the landing, the officials took up the table, and Toulan and Lepitre the wooden stools. One quick look they cast into the room of the queen, whose eyes were turned to them. A sudden movement of Lepitre's hand pointed to the bench beneath the window: a movement of Toulan's lips said "To-morrow;" then they both turned away; went with their stools out upon the landing, and closed the door.

The queen held her breath and listened. She heard them moving the chairs outside, and pushing the table up against the door, and detected Simon's harsh voice, saying, "Now that we have put a gigantic wooden lock on the door, let us smoke and play."

The queen sprang up. "God bless my faithful one," whispered she; "yes, God bless him!"

She went hastily into the anteroom, pressed her hand in behind the bench beneath the window, took out the package which Lepitre had placed there, and with a timid, anxious look, stepped back into her room. Here she unfolded the bundle. It consisted of a boy's soiled dress, an old peruke, and an old felt hat.

The queen looked at it with the utmost attention; then, after casting one long, searching look through the room, she hastened to the divan, pushed back the already loosened cover of the seat, concealed the things beneath it, and then carefully smoothed down the upholstery again.

She now hurried to the door of the sleeping-room, and was going to open it hastily. But she bethought herself in time. Her face showed too much emotion, her voice might betray her. Madame Tison was certainly lurking behind the glass door, and might notice her excitement.

Marie Antoinette again put on her ordinary sad look, opened the door slowly and gravely, and quietly entered the sleeping-room. Her great eyes, whose brightness had long since been extinguished by her tears, slowly passed around the chamber, rested for a moment on the glass door, descried behind it the spying face of Tison, and turned to the two princesses, who were sitting with the dauphin on the little divan in the corner.

"Mamma," asked the boy, "are the bad men gone?"

"Do not call them so, my child," replied Marie Antoinette, gently. "These men only do what others order them to do."

"Then the others are bad, mamma," said the boy, quickly. "Oh, yes, very bad, for they make my dear mamma weep so much."

"I do not weep about them," answered his mother. "I weep because your father is no more with us. Think about your father, my son, and never forget that he has commanded us to forgive his and our enemies."

"And never to take vengeance on them," added the boy, with a grave look beyond his years, as he folded his hands. "Yes, I have sworn it to my dear papa, and I shall keep my word. I mean never to take vengeance on our enemies."

"Sister," said the queen, after a pause, "I want to ask you to help me a little in my work. You know how to mend, and I want to learn of you. Will you come into the sitting-room?"

"And we, too, mamma," asked the dauphin, "may we not stay here? Theresa has promised to tell me an interesting story if I did my examples in arithmetic correctly, and I have done them."

"Well, she may tell you the story. We will leave the door open so that we can see you; for you know, my children, you are now the only comfort left to your aunt and me. Come, sister!"

She turned slowly and went into the next room, followed by Madame Elizabeth.

"Why, what does this mean?" asked the princess, in amazement, as she saw the anteroom deserted and the door closed.

"All *his* work, Elizabeth—all the work of this noble, faithful Toulan. He went through a whole farce in order to get the people out of here, and to make them swear that they never would smoke after this in the anteroom. Oh, I shall never be able to repay him for what he has done for us at the peril of his life."

"We will pray for him every morning and evening," replied the pious Elizabeth. "But tell me, sister, did Toulan keep our ball of thread?"

"Yes, sister, and succeeded in giving me another in exchange for it. Here it is. To-night, when the guards are asleep, we will unwind it and see what it contains. But here are other important things which we must examine. Here, this half-burned light and this cigarette! Let us be on the watch that no one surprise us."

She went again to the threshold of the sleeping-room.

"Can you hear me talk, children? Nod with your head if you heard me. Good. If Tison comes in, speak to her loudly, and call her by name, so that we may hear."

"And now, sister," she continued, turning to the table, "let us see what Toulan has sent us. First, the cigar-light!"

She unfolded the paper, one side of which was burned, and showed a black, jagged edge.

"A letter from M. de Jarjayes," she said, and then, in a subdued voice, she hastily read: "I have spoken with the noble messenger whom you sent to me with a letter. He has submitted his plan to me, and I approve it entirely, and am ready to undertake any thing that is demanded of me in behalf of those to whom my life, my property, and my blood belong, and who never shall have occasion to doubt my fidelity. The 'true one' will bring you to-morrow every thing that is needful, and talk the matter over with you.—J." "And now the cigarette," said the queen, taking it out of her basket.

"Let us first tear the paper to pieces," said Princess Elizabeth, warningly.

"No, no, Tison would find the bits, and think them suspicious. I will hide the paper in my dress-pocket, and this evening when we have a light we will burn it. Quickly now, the cigar!"

"A paper cigarette!" said Elizabeth.

"Yes, and see on the outer paper, 'Unroll carefully!'"

And with extreme caution Marie Antoinette removed the external covering. Beneath it was another, closely written over; this the queen proceeded to unfold.

"What is it?" asked the Princess Elizabeth, impatiently.

"See," said Marie Antoinette, with a faint smile: "'Plan for the escape of the royal family. To learn by heart, and then to burn.' Oh! sister, do you believe that escape is possible for us?"

At this instant Simon was heard outside, singing with his loud, coarse voice:

"Madame à sa tour monte
Ne sait quand descendra,
Madame Veto la dansera." *

The queen shuddered, and Madame Elizabeth folded her hands and prayed in silence.

"You hear the dreadful answer, sister, that this *sans-culotte* gives to my question! Well, so long as there is a breath left within us we must endeavor to save the life of King Louis XVII. Come, sister, we will read this plan for our escape, which the faithful Toulan has made."

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* "Madame will take her turn,
She knows not when it will come,
But Madame Veto will swing."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PLAN OF THE ESCAPE.

Marie Antoinette and Madame Elizabeth listened again at the door, and as Simon was just then beginning a new verse of his ribald song, they carefully unrolled the paper and spread it out before them.

"Read it to me, sister," said the queen. "My eyes are bad and pain me very much; and then the words make more impression when I hear them than when I read them; I beg you therefore to read it."

In a light whisper the princess began to read "The Plan of Escape." "The queen and Princess Elizabeth must put on men's clothes. The necessary garments are already in their possession, for T. and L. have within the last few days secreted them in the cushions and mattresses. In addition, the queen receives to-day a dirty, torn boy's suit and a peruke, and a pair of soiled children's shoes. These are for the dauphin and Madame Royale; and if the queen looks attentively at the things, she will find that they are exact copies of the clothing in which the two children appear who always accompany the lamplighter into the tower and assist him in lighting the lamps. So much for the clothing. The plan of escape is as follows: To-morrow evening, at six o'clock, the royal children will change their dress in the little tower next to the chamber of the queen. In their soiled costume they will remain within the tower, whither it is known that Tison and his wife never come, and will wait there until some one gives them a signal and calls them. Toulan and Lepitre will arrange to have the watch again to-morrow in the tower. At a quarter before seven in the evening, Toulan will give a pinch of snuff to Madame Tison and her husband, who are both passionately fond of it, and they will speedily take it as they always do. This pinch of snuff will consist entirely of colored opium. They will fall into a heavy sleep, which will last at least seven hours, and during this time the flight of all the members of the royal family must be accomplished—"

"Wait a moment, sister," whispered the queen, "I feel dizzy, and my heart beats violently, as if we were engaged now in the very execution of the plan. It seems to me as if, in the darkness of the dreadful night which surrounds us, a glimmer of hope was suddenly appearing, and my eyes are blinded with it. Oh, sister, do you really think it possible that we can escape this place of torment?"

"Escape we will certainly, my dear sister," answered Elizabeth, gently, "but it lies in God's hands whether it is our bodies or our souls only that will escape. If we do not succeed, they will kill us, and then our freed souls will ascend to God. Oh, my noble queen and sister, let us pray that God would give us courage and steadfastness to hope in Him and to conform to His will."

"Yes, sister, let us pray," said the queen, folding her hands, and reverentially bending her head. Then after a pause, in which they could hear from without the noisy laughter of Simon and his comrades, the queen raised herself up, and her countenance had regained its wonted calm and grave expression.

"And now, Elizabeth, read on further. Let us hear the continuation of the plan."

Madame Elizabeth took the paper and read on in a whispering voice: "As soon as Tison and his wife have fallen asleep, the queen and Madame Elizabeth will put on their clothes. Over the men's garments they will throw the cloaks which Toulan brought yesterday, and these cloaks will disguise their gait and size. But care must be taken that the tri-colored sashes of the commissaries which Lepitre brought yesterday with the admission-cards of the same authorities, should peep out from beneath the cloaks so as to be visible to every one. Thus arrayed, the two ladies will pass by the sentry, showing him the card as they go out (meanwhile talking with Lepitre), leave the Temple, and go with Lepitre to the Rue de la Conderie, where M. de Jarjayes will be waiting to conduct the ladies farther."

"But the children," whispered the queen, "do the children not accompany us? Oh! they ought not to think that I would leave this place while my dear children are compelled to remain here. What is to be done with the children, Elizabeth?"

"We shall soon learn that, sister; allow me to read on. 'At seven o'clock, as soon as the guard is changed, a man disguised as a lamplighter, with his tin filler in his hand, will appear at the gate of the Temple, knock loudly and demand of the guard that his children, who had this day been taking care of the lantern, should be allowed to come out. On this, Toulan will bring the dauphin and Madame Royale in their changed costume, and while delivering them over to the supposed lamplighter he will scold him soundly for not taking care of the lanterns himself, but giving it to the children. This is the plan whose execution is possible and probable, if every thing is strictly followed. Before the affair is discovered, there will be at least seven hours' advantage and the royal family will be able, with the passes already secured by M. Jarjayes, to be a long way off before their flight will be discovered by Tison. In a secure house, whither Toulan will lead them, the royal family will find simple citizen's clothing. Without exciting any stir, and accompanied by Messieurs Jarjayes and Toulan, they will reach Normandy. A packet-boat furnished by an English friend lies in readiness to receive the royal family and take them to their—'"

"Good-day, Madame Tison!" cried the dauphin loudly, "good-day, my dear Madame Tison!"

Madame Elizabeth hastily concealed the paper in her bosom, and Marie Antoinette had scarcely time to hide the ball of thread in her pocket, when Tison appeared upon the threshold of the door, looked with her sharp lynx-eyes around, and then fixed them upon the two ladies.

She saw that Marie Antoinette did not display her accustomed dignified calmness, and that Elizabeth's pale cheeks were unusually red.

"Something is going on," said the spy to herself, "and what does it mean that to-day the commissaries are not in the anteroom, and that they let these women carry on their chattering entirely unwatched?"

"Madame has been reading?" asked Tison, subjecting every object upon the table before which the ladies were sitting, to a careful scrutiny. "Madame has been reading," she repeated; "I heard paper rattling, and I see no book."

"You are under a mistake," replied Madame Elizabeth, "we have not been reading, we have been sewing; but supposing we were reading, is there any wrong in that? Have they made any law that forbids that?"

"No," answered Tison, "no—I only wondered how people could rattle paper and there be none there, but all the same—the ladies of course have a right to read, and we must be satisfied with that."

And she went out, looking right and left like a hound on the scent, and searching every corner of the room.

"I must see what kind of officials we have here to-day," said Tison to herself, slipping through the little side-door and through the corridor; "I shouldn't wonder if it were Toulan and Lepitre again, for every time when they two—right!" she ejaculated, looking through the outer door, "right! it is they, Toulan and Lepitre. I must see what Simon's wife has to say to that."

She slipped down the broad staircase, and passed through the open door into the porter's lodge. Madame Simon, one of the most savage of the knitters, had shortly returned from the guillotine, and was sitting upon her rush chair, busily counting on a long cotton stocking which she held in her hand.

"How many heads to-day?" asked Tison.

Madame Simon slowly shook her head, decorated with a white knit cap.

"It is hardly worth the pains," she said dismally,—"the machine works badly, and the judges are neglectful. Only five cars to-day, and on every one only seven persons."

"What!" cried Tison, "only thirty-five heads to-day in all?"

"Yes, only thirty-five heads," repeated Madame Simon, shaking her head; "I have just been counting on my stocking, and I find only thirty-five seam-stitches, for every seam-stitch means a head. For such a little affair we have had to sit six hours in the wet and cold on the platform. The machine works too slowly, I say—altogether too slowly. The judges are easy, and there is no more pleasure to be derived from the executions."

"They must be stirred up," said Tison with a fiendish look; "your husband must speak with his friend, citizen

Marat, and tell him that his best friends the knitters, and most of all, Simon's wife, are dissatisfied, and if it goes on so, the women will rise and hurry all the men to the guillotine. That will stir them up, for they do respect the knitters, and if they fear the devil, they fear yet more his proud grandmother, and every one of us market-women and knitters is the devil's grandmother."

"Yes, they do respect us and they shall," said Madame Simon, setting her glistening needles in motion again, and working slowly on the stocking; "I will myself speak with citizen Marat, and believe me, I will fire him up, and then we shall have better play, and see more cars driven up to the guillotine. We must keep our eyes well open, and denounce all suspicious characters."

"I have my eyes always open," cried Tison, with a coarse laugh, "and I suspect traitors before they have committed any thing. There, for example, are the two officials, Toulan and Lepitre, do you have confidence in them?"

"I have no confidence in them whatever, and I have never had any confidence in them," answered Madame Simon, with dignity, and setting her needles in more rapid motion. "In these times you must trust nobody, and least of all those who are so very earnest to keep guard over the Austrian woman; for a true republican despises the aristocracy altogether too much to find it agreeable to be with such scum, and shows it as much as he can, but Toulan is always wanting to be there. Wait a moment, and I will tell you how many times Toulan and Lepitre have kept guard the present month."

She drew a little memorandum-book from her reticule, which hung by black bands from her brown hairy arm, and turned over the leaves. "There, here it is," she said. "To-day is the 20th of February, and the two men have already kept guard eight times the present month. That is three times as many as they need to do. Every one of the officials who were appointed to keep guard in the Temple is obliged to serve only once a week, and both of these traitors are now here for the eighth time. And my husband is so stupid and so blinded that he believes this prattler Toulan when he tells him he comes here merely to be with citizen Simon; but they cannot come round me with their talk; they cannot throw dust in my eyes. I shall keep them open, wide open, let me tell you."

"They are not sitting inside in the antechamber to-day," whispered Tison, "but outside on the landing, and they have closed the door of the anteroom, so that the Austrian has been entirely alone and unobserved these hours."

"Alone!" cried the knitter, and her polished needles struck so violently against each other that you could hear them click. "My husband cannot be to blame for that; Toulan must have talked him into it, and he must have a reason for it; he must have a reason, and if it is only from his having pity upon her, that is enough and more than enough to bring him under suspicion and to build an accusation upon. He must be removed, say I. There shall no such compassionate worms as he creep into the Temple. I will clear them out—I will clear them out with human blood!"

She looked so devilish, her eyes glared so with such a cruel coldness, and such a fiendish smile played upon her pale, thin lips, that even Madame Tison was afraid of her, and felt as if a cold, poisonous spider was creeping slowly over her heart.

"They are sitting still outside, you say?" asked Madame Simon, after a pause.

"Yes, they are still sitting outside upon the landing, and the Austrian woman is at this time alone unwatched with her brood, and she will be alone for two hours yet, for there is no change of guard till then."

"That is true, yes, that is true," cried the knitter, and her nostrils expanded like those of the hyena when on the scent of blood. "They will sit up there two hours longer, playing cards and singing stupid songs, and wheedling my monkey of a husband with their flatteries, making him believe that they love him, love him boundlessly, and they let themselves be locked into the Temple for his sake, and—oh! if I had them here, I would strangle them with my own hands! I would make a dagger of every one of my knitting-needles and thrust it into their hearts! But quiet, quiet," she continued in a grumbling tone, "every thing must go on in a regular way. Will you take my place here for half an hour and guard the door? I have something important to do, something very important."

"It will be a very great honor," replied Madame Tison, "a very great honor to be the substitute of one so well known and respected as you are, of whom every one knows that she is the best patriot and the most courageous knitter, whose eyelashes never quiver, and who can calmly go on with her stitches when the heads fall from the guillotine into the basket."

"If I did tremble, and my eyelashes did quiver, I would dash my own fists into my eyes!" said Madame Simon, with her hard coarse voice, rising and throwing her thin, threadbare cloak over her shoulders. "If I found a spark of sympathy in my heart, I would inundate it with the blood of aristocrats till it should be extinguished, and till that should be, I would despise and hate myself, for I should be not only a bad patriot, but a bad daughter of my unfortunate father. The cursed aristocrats have not only brought misery on our country and people, but they murdered my dear good father. Yes, murdered I say. They said he was a high traitor. And do you know why? Because he told aloud the nice stories about the Austrian woman, who was then our queen, which had been whispered into his ear, and because he said that the king was a mere tool in the hands of his wife. They shot my good, brave father for what he had said, and which they called treason, although it was only the naked truth. Yet I will not work myself into a passion about it, and I will only thank God that that time is past, and I will do my part that it shall not come back. And that is why we must be awake and on our guard, that no aristocrat and no royalist be left, but that they all be guillotined, all! There, take your place on my chair, and take my knitting-work. Ah! if it could speak to you as it does to me—if it could tell you what heads we two have seen fall, young and old, handsome, distinguished—it would be fine sport for you and make you laugh. But good-by just now! Keep a strict lookout! I shall come back soon."

And she did come back soon, this worthy woman, with triumphant bearing and flashing eyes, looking as the cat looks when it has a mouse in its soft velvety paws, and is going to push its poisonous claws into the quivering flesh. She took her knitting-work up and bade Tison to go up again to her post.

"And when you can," she said, "just touch the Austrian woman a little, and pay her off for being so many hours unwatched. In that way you will merit a reward from the people, and that is as well as deserving one of God. Provoke her—provoke the proud Austrian!"

"It is very hard to do it," said Tison, sighing—"very hard, I assure you, for the Austrian is very cold and moderate of late. Since Louis Capet died, the widow is very much changed, and now she is so uniform in her temper that it seems as if nothing would provoke or excite her."

"What weak and tender creatures you all are!" said Simon's wife, with a shrug. "It is very plain that they fed you on milk when you were young. But my mother nursed me with hate. I was scarcely ten years when they shot my father, and not a day passed after that without my mother's telling me that we must avenge his murder on the whole lineage of the king. I had to swear that I would do it. She gave me, for my daily food, hatred against the aristocrats; it was the meat to my sauce, the sugar to my coffee, the butter to my bread! I lived and throve upon it. Look at me, and see what such fare has made of me! Look at me! I am not yet twenty-four years old, and yet I have the appearance of an old woman, and I have the feeling and the experience of an old woman! Nothing moves me now, and the only thing that lives and burns in my heart is revenge. Believe me, were I in your place I should know how to exasperate the Austrian; I should succeed in drawing out her tears."

"Well, and how would you begin? Really, I should like to know how to bring this incarnation of pride to weeping."

"Has not she children?" asked Madame Simon, with a horrible calmness. "I would torture and provoke the children, and that would soon make the heart of the woman humble and pliable. Oh, she may count herself happy that I am not in your place, and that her children are not under my tender hands. But if it ever happens that I can lay my fingers upon the shoulders of the little wolves, I will give them something that will make them cry out, and make the old wolf howl with rage. I will show her as little favor then as she showed when my poor mother and I were begging for my dear father! Go up, go up and try at once. Plague the children, and you will see that that will make the Austrian pliable."

"That is fine talk," muttered Tison, as she went up the staircase, "but she has no children, while I have a daughter, a dear, good daughter. She is not with me, but with my mother in Normandy, because she can be taken better care of there than here. It is better for the good child that she has not gone through these evil days full of blood and grief with us. But I am always thinking of her, and when one of these two children here looks up to me so gravely with great, open eyes, it always makes me think of my Solonge. She has exactly such large, innocent eyes, and that touches my heart so that I cannot be harsh with the children. They, of course, are not at all to blame for having such bad, miserable parents, who have treated the people shamefully, and made them poor and wretched. No, they have had nothing to do with it, and I cannot be severe with the children, for I am always thinking of my little Solonge! I will provoke the Austrian woman as much as I can, but not the children—no, not the children!"

Meanwhile, Mistress Simon had taken her place upon the chair near the open door in the porter's lodge, and sat there with her cold, immovable face staring into empty space with her great coal-black, glistening eyes, while her hands were busily flying, making the polished knitting-needles click against each other.

She was still sitting there, when at last her husband came down the stairs to open the outer door of the Temple, conduct his friends past the inner court, and to bring back the two officials who were to keep guard during the night.

They passed the knitter with a friendly salutation and a bit of pleasantry—Toulan stopping a moment to ask the woman after her welfare, and to say a few smooth words to her about her courage and her great force of character.

She listened quietly, let him go on with his talk, and when he had ended, slowly raised her great eyes from her knitting to him.

"You are a traitor," she said, with coldness, and without any agitation. "Yes, you are a traitor, and you, too, will have your turn at the guillotine!"

Toulan paled a little, but collected himself immediately, took leave of the knitter with a smile, and hastened after the officials, who were waiting for him at the open door—the two who were to hold the watch during the night having already entered.

Simon closed the door after them, exchanged a few words with them, and then went into his lodge to join his rigid better half.

"This has been a pleasant afternoon, and it is a great pity that it is gone, for I have had a very good time. We have played cards, sung, smoked, and Toulan has made jokes and told stories, and made much fun. I always wonder where he gets so many fine stories, and he tells them so well that I could hear him day and night. Now that he is gone, it seems tedious and dull enough here. Well, we must comfort ourselves that to-morrow will come by and by."

"What do you mean by that?" asked his wife, sternly. "What sort of a day do you expect to-morrow to be?"

"A pleasant day, my dear Heloise, for Citizen Toulan will have the watch again. I begged him so long, that he at last promised to exchange with Citizen Pelletan, whose turn regularly comes to-morrow. Pelletan is not well, and it would be very hard for him to sit up there all day, and, besides, he would be dreadfully stupid. It is a great deal pleasanter to have Toulan here with his jokes and jolly stories, and so I begged him to come and take Pelletan's place. He is going to accommodate me and come."

His wife did not answer a word, but broke out in a burst of shrill, mocking laughter, and with her angry black eyes she scrutinized her husband's red, bloated face, as though she were reading him through and through.

"What are you laughing at?" he asked, angrily. "I would like to be beyond hearing when you give way in that style. What *are* you laughing at?"

"Because I wonder at you, you Jack," she answered sharply. "Because you are determined to make an ass of yourself, and let dust be thrown in your eyes, and put yourself at the disposal of every one who soaps you over with smooth words."

"Come," said Simon, "none of that coarseness! and if you—"

"Hist!" she answered, commandingly. "I will show you at once that I have told you the truth, and that you are making an ass of yourself, or at least that you are on the point of doing so. Now, listen."

The knitter laid her work aside, and had a long conversation in a whisper with her husband. When it ended, Simon stood up wearing a dark look, and walked slowly backward and forward in the little room. Then he stopped and shook his fist threateningly at the room above. "She shall pay for this," he muttered—"by God in heaven! she shall pay for this. She is a good-for-nothing seducer! Even in prison she does not leave off coquetting, and flirting, and turning the heads of the men! It is disgraceful, thoroughly disgraceful, and she shall pay for it! I will soon find means to have my revenge on her!"

During the whole evening Mistress Tison did not leave her place behind the glass door for a moment, and at each stolen glance which the queen cast thither she always encountered the malicious, glaring eyes of the keeper, directed at her with an impudent coolness.

At last came the hour of going to bed—the hour to which the queen looked impatiently forward. At night she was at least alone and unguarded. After the death of the king, it had been found superfluous to trouble the officials with the wearisome night-watches, and they were satisfied, after darkness had set in and the candles were lighted, with locking the three doors which led to the inner rooms.

Did Marie Antoinette weep and moan at night, did she talk with her sister, did she walk disconsolately up and down her room?—the republic granted her the privilege. She could, during the night at least, have a few hours of freedom and of solitude.

But during the night Marie Antoinette did not weep or moan; this night her thoughts were not directed to the sad past, but to the future; for the first ray of hope which had fallen upon her path for a long time now encountered her.

"To escape, to be free!" she said, and the shadow of a smile flitted over her face. "Can you believe it? Do you consider it possible, sister?"

"I should like to believe it," whispered Elizabeth, "but there is something in my heart that reminds me of Varennes, and I only pray to God that He would give us strength to bear all the ills they inflict upon us. We must, above all things, keep our calmness and steadfastness, and be prepared for the worst as well as the best."

"Yes, you are right, we must do that," said Marie Antoinette, collecting herself. "When one has suffered as we have, it is almost more difficult to hope for good fortune than to prepare for new terrors. I will compel myself to be calm. I will read Toulan's plan once more, and will impress it word for word upon my memory, so as to burn the dangerous sheet as soon as possible."

"And while you are doing that I will unwind the ball that Toulan brought us, and which certainly contains something heavy," said the princess.

"What a grand, noble heart! what a lofty character has our friend Toulan!" whispered the queen. "His courage is inexhaustible, his fidelity is invincible, and he is entirely unselfish. How often have I implored him to express one wish to me that I might gratify, or to allow me to give him a draft of some amount! He is not to be shaken—he wants nothing, he will take nothing. Ah, Elizabeth, he is the first friend, of all who ever drew toward me, who made no claims and was contented with a kind word. When I implored him yesterday to tell me in what way I could do him a service, he said: 'If you want to make me happy, regard me always as your most devoted and faithful servant, and give me a name that you give to no one besides. Call me Fidèle, and if you want to give me another remembrancer than that which will always live in my heart, present me, as the highest token of your favor, with the little gold smelling-bottle which I saw you use in the Logograph box on that dreadful day.' I gave him the trinket at once. He kneeled down in order to receive it, and when he kissed my hand his hot tears fell upon it. Ah, Elizabeth, no one of those to whom in the days of our happiness I gave jewels, and to whom I gave hundreds of thousands, cherished for me so warm thanks as Toulan—no, as Fidèle—for the poor, insignificant little remembrancer."

"God is good and great," said the princess, who, while the queen was speaking, was busily engaged in unwinding the thread; "in order that we might not lose faith in humanity and confidence in man, He sent us in His mercy this noble, true-hearted one, whose devotion, disinterestedness, and fidelity were to be our compensation for all the sad and heart rending experiences which we have endured. And, therefore, for the sake of this one noble man let us pardon the many from whom we have received only injury; for it says in the Bible that, for the sake of one righteous man, many sinners shall be forgiven, and Toulan is a righteous man."

"Yes, he is a righteous man, blessings on him!" whispered the queen. Then she took the paper in her hand, and began to read the contents softly, repeating every sentence to herself, and imprinting every one of those hope-bringing words upon her memory; and while she read, her poor, crushed heart gradually began to beat with firmer confidence, and to embrace the possibility of realizing the plan of Toulan and finding freedom in flight.

During this time Princess Elizabeth had unwound the thread of the ball, and brought to light a little packet enveloped in paper.

"Take it, my dear Antoinette," she said, "it is addressed to you."

Marie Antoinette took it and carefully unfolded the paper. Then she uttered a low, carefully-suppressed cry, and, sinking upon her knees, pressed it with its contents to her lips.

"What is it, sister?" cried the princess, hurrying to her. "What does Toulan demand?"

The queen gave the paper to the princess. "Read," she said—"read it, sister."

Elizabeth read: "Your majesty wished to possess the relics which King Louis left to you. They consist of the wedding-ring of his majesty, his little seal, and the hair which the king himself cut off. These three things lay on the chimney-piece in the closed sitting-room of the king. The supervisor of the Temple took them from Clery's hand, to whom the king gave them, and put them under seal. I have succeeded in getting into the sitting-room; I have opened the sealed packet, taken out the sacred relics, put articles of similar character in their place, and sealed it up again. With this letter are the relics which belong to your majesty, and I swear by all that is sacred and dear to me—I swear by the head of my queen, that they are the true articles which the blessed martyr, King Louis XVI., conveyed to his wife in his testament. I have stolen them for the exalted heir of the crown, and I shall one day glory in the theft before the throne of God." *

"See, Elizabeth," said the queen, unfolding the little things, each one of which was carefully wrapped in paper—"see, there is his wedding-ring. There on the inside are the four letters, 'M. A. A. A., 19th April, 1770.' The day of our marriage!—a day of joy for Austria as well as for France! Then—but I will not think of it. Let me look further. Here is the seal! The cornelian engraved on two sides. Here on one side the French arms; as you turn the stone, the portrait of our son the Dauphin of France, with his helmet on his head. Oh! my son, my poor dear child, will your loved head ever bear any other ornament than a martyr's crown; will God grant you to wear the helmet of the warrior, and to battle for your rights and your throne? How pleased my husband was when on his birthday I brought him this seal! how tenderly his looks rested upon the portrait of his son, his successor! and now—oh, now! King Louis XVI. cruelly, shamefully murdered, and he who ought to be the King of France, Louis XVII., is nothing but a poor, imprisoned child—a king without a crown, without hope, without a future!"

"No, no, Antoinette," whispered Elizabeth, who had kneeled before the queen and had tenderly put her arms around her—"no, Antoinette, do not say that your son has no hope and no future. Build upon God, hope that the undertaking which we are to-morrow to execute will lead to a fortunate result, that we shall flee from here, that we shall be free, that we shall be able to reach England. Oh, yes, let us hope that Toulan's fine and bold plan will succeed, and then it may one day be that the son of my dear brother, grown to be a young man, may put the helmet on

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* Goncourt, "Histoire de Marie Antoinette," p. 284.

his head, gird himself with the sword, reconquer the throne of his fathers, and take possession of it as King Louis XVII. Therefore let us hope, sister."

"Yes, therefore let us hope" whispered the queen, drying her tears. "And here at last," she continued, opening the remaining paper, "here is the third relic, the hair of the king!—the only thing which is left us of the martyr king, the unfortunate husband of an unfortunate wife, the pitiable king of a most pitiable people! Oh, my king! they have laid your poor head that bore this white hair—they have laid it upon the scaffold, and the axe, the dreadful axe—"

The queen uttered a loud shriek of horror, sprang up, and raised both her hands in conjuration to Heaven, while a curse just trembled on her lips. But Princess Elizabeth threw herself into her arms, and pressed on the cold, quivering lips of the queen a long, fervent kiss.

"For God's sake, sister," she whispered, "speak softly. If Tison heard your cry, we are lost. Hush! it seems to me I hear steps, hide the things. Let us hurry into bed. Oh, for God's sake, quick!"

She huddled the papers together, and put them hastily into her bosom, while Marie Antoinette, gathering up the relics, dashed into her bed.

"She is coming," whispered Elizabeth, as she slipped into her bed. "We must pretend to be asleep."

And in fact Princess Elizabeth was right. The glass-door, which led from the sleeping-room of the children to the little corridor, and from there to the chamber of Mistress Tison, was slowly and cautiously opened, and she came with a lamp in her hand into the children's room. She stood near the door, listening and spying around. In the beds of the children she could hear the long-drawn, calm breathing, which indicated peaceful slumbers; and in the open, adjoining apartment, in which the two ladies slept, nothing was stirring.

"But I did hear a sound plainly," muttered Tison. "I was awaked by a loud cry, and when I sat up in bed I heard people talking."

She stole to the beds of the children, and let the light fall upon their faces. "They are sleeping soundly enough," she muttered, "they have not cried or spoken, but we will see how it is in the other room." Slowly, with the lamp in her hand, she crept into the neighboring apartment. The two ladies lay motionless upon their beds, closing their eyes quickly when Mistress Tison crossed the threshold, and praying to God for courage and steadfastness.

Tison went first to the bed of Princess Elizabeth and let the lamp fall full upon her face. The glare seemed to awaken her. "What is it?" she cried, "what has happened? sister, what has happened? where are you, Marie Antoinette?"

"Here, here I am, Elizabeth," cried the queen, rising suddenly up in bed, as if awakened. "Why do you call me, and who is here?"

"It is I," muttered Tison, angrily. "That is the way if one has a bad conscience! One is startled then with the slightest sound."

"We have no bad conscience," said Elizabeth, gently, "but you know that if we are awakened from sleep we cry out easily, and we might be thinking that some one was waking us to bring us happy tidings."

"I hope so," cried Tison, with a scornful laugh, "Happy news for you! that means unhappy and sad news for France and for the French people. No, thank God! I did not waken you to bring you any good news."

"Well," said the queen, gently, "tell us why you have wakened us and what you have to communicate to us."

"I have nothing at all to communicate to you," growled Tison, "and you know best whether I woke you or you were already awake, talking and crying aloud. Hist! it is not at all necessary that you answer, I know well enough that you are capable of lying. I tell you my ears are open and my eyes too. I let nothing escape me; you have talked and you have cried aloud, and if it occurs again I shall report it to the supervisor and have a watch put here in the night again, that the rest of us may have a little quiet in the night-time, and not have to sleep like the hares, with our eyes open."

"But," said the princess gently, "but dear woman—"

"Hush!" interrupted Tison, commandingly, "I am not your 'dear woman,' I am the wife of Citizen Tison, and I want none of your confidence, for confidence from such persons as you are, might easily bring me to the scaffold."

She now passed through the whole room with her slow, stealthy tread, let the light fall upon every article of furniture and the floor, examined all the objects that lay upon the table, and then, after one last threatening look at the beds of the two ladies, went slowly out. She stopped again at the cribs of the children, and looked at them with a touch of gentleness. "How quietly they sleep!" she whispered. "They lie there exactly as they lay before. One would think they were smiling in their sleep—I suppose they are playing with angels. I should like to know how angels come into this old, horrid Temple, and what Simon's wife would say if she knew they came in here at night without her permission. See, see," she continued, "the boy is laughing again, and spreading out his hands, as if he wanted to catch the angels. Ah! I should like to know if my dear little Solange is sleeping as soundly as these children, and whether she smiles in her sleep and plays with angels; I should like to know if she dreams of her parents, my dear little Solange, and whether she sometimes sees her poor mother, who loves her so and yearns toward her so tenderly that—" *

She could not go on; tears extinguished her utterance, and she hastened out, to silence her longings on the pillow of her bed.

The ladies listened a long time in perfect silence; then, when every thing was still again, they raised themselves up softly, and began to talk to each other in the faintest of whispers, and to make their final preparations for the flight of the morrow. They then rose and drew from the various hiding-places the garments which they were to use, placed the various suits together, and then tried to put them on. A fearful, awful picture, such as a painter of hell, such as

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* This Mistress Tison, the cruel keeper of the queen, soon after this fell into lunacy, owing both to her longings after her daughter and her compunctions of conscience for her treatment of the queen. The first token of her insanity was her falling upon her knees before Marie Antoinette, and begging pardon for all the pain she had occasioned, and amid floods of tears accusing herself as the one who would be answerable for the death of the queen. She then fell into such dreadful spasms, that four men were scarcely able to hold her. They carried her into the Hôtel Dieu, where she died after two days of the most dreadful sufferings and bitter reproaches of herself.—See Goncourt, p. 280.

Breugel could not surpass in horror!—a queen and a princess, two tender, pale, harmless women, busied, deep in the night, as if dressing for a masquerade, in transforming themselves into those very officials who had led the king to the scaffold, and who, with their pitiless iron hands, were detaining the royal family in prison!

There they stood, a queen, a princess, clad in the coarse, threadbare garments of republican officials, the tri-colored sashes of the "one indivisible republic" around their bodies, their heads covered with the three-cornered hats, on which the tri-colored cockade glittered. They stood and viewed each other with sad looks and heavy sighs. Ah, what bright, joyous laughter would have sprung from the lips of the queen in the days of her happiness, if she had wanted to hide her beauty in such attire for some pleasant masquerade at Trianon! What charming sport it would have been then and there! How would her friends and courtiers have laughed! How they would have admired the queen in her original costume, which might well have been thought to belong to the realm of dreams and fantasies! A tri-colored cockade—a figment of the brain—a tri-colored sash—a merry dream! The lilies rule over France, and will rule forever!

No laughter resounded in the desolate room, scantily lighted with the dim taper—no laughter as the queen and the princess put on their strange, fearful attire. It was no masquerade, but a dreadful, horrible reality; and as they looked at each other wearing the costume of revolutionists, tears started from the eyes of the queen; the princess folded her hands and prayed; and she too could not keep back the drops that slowly coursed over her cheeks.

The lilies of France are faded and torn from the ground! From the palace of the Tuileries waved the tri-color of the republic, and in the palace of the former Knights Templars is a pale, sad woman, with gray hair and sunken eyes, a broken heart, and a bowed form. This pale, sad shadow of the past is Marie Antoinette, once the Queen of France, the renowned beauty, the first woman in a great kingdom, now the widow of an executed man, she herself probably with one foot—

No, no, she will be saved! God has sent her a deliverer, a friend, and this friend, this helper in her need, has made every thing ready for her flight.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SEPARATION.

SLOWLY and heavily the hours of the next day rolled on. Where was Toulan? Why did he not come? The queen waited for him the whole of that long, dreadful day in feverish expectation. She listened to every sound, to every approaching step, to every voice that echoed in the corridor. At noon Toulan had purposed to come to take his post as guard. At six, when the time of lighting the lamps should arrive, the disguises were to be put on. At seven the carefully and skilfully-planned flight was to be made.

The clock in the tower of the Temple had already struck four. Toulan had not yet come, and the guards of the day had not yet been relieved. They had had a little leisure at noon for dinner, and during the interim Simon and Tison were on guard, and had kept the queen on the rack with their mockery and their abusive words. In order to avoid the language and the looks of these men, she had fled into the children's room, to whom the princess, in her trustful calmness and unshaken equanimity, was assigning them lessons. Marie Antoinette wanted to find protection here from the dreadful anxiety that tortured her, as well as from the ribald jests and scurrility of her keepers. But Mistress Tison was there, standing near the glass window, gazing in with a malicious grin, and working in her wonted, quick way upon the long stocking, and knitting, knitting, so that you could hear the needles click together.

The queen could not give way to a word or a look. That would have created suspicion, and would, perhaps, have caused an examination to be made. She had to bear all in silence, she had to appear indifferent and calm; she had to give pleasant answers to the dauphin's innocent questions, and even compel a smile to her lips when the child, read ing in her looks, by the instinct of love, her great excitement, tried to cheer her up with pleasant words.

It struck five, and still Toulan did not come. A chill crept over her heart, and in the horror which filled her she first became conscious how much love of life still survived in her, and how intensely she had hoped to find a possibility of escape.

Only one last hour of hope left! If it should strike six, and he should not come, all would be lost! The doors of her prison would be closed forever—never opening again excepting to allow Marie Antoinette to pass to the guillotine.

Mistress Tison had gone, and her cold, mocking face was no longer visible behind the glass door. The guards in the anteroom had also gone, and had closed the doors behind them. The queen was, therefore, safe from being watched at least! She could fall upon her knees, she could raise her hands to God and wrestle with Him in speechless prayer for pity and deliverance. She could call her children to herself, and press them to her heart, and whisper to them that they must be composed if they should see something strange, and not wonder if they should have to put on clothing that they were not accustomed to.

"Mamma," asked the dauphin, in a whisper, "are we going to Varennes again?"

The queen shuddered in her inmost soul at this question, and hid her quivering face on the faithful breast of the princess.

"Oh, sister, I am suffocating with anxiety," she said. "I feel that this hour is to decide the lives of us all, and it seems to me as if Death were already stretching out his cold hand toward me. We are lost, and my son, my unhappy son, will never wear any other than the martyr's crown, and—"

The queen was silent, for just then the tower-clock began to strike, slowly, peacefully, the hour of six! The critical moment! The lamplight must come now! If it were Toulan, they might be saved. Some unforeseen occurrence might have prevented his coming before; he might have borrowed the suit of the bribed lamplighter in order to come to them. There was hope still—one last, pale ray of hope!

Steps upon the corridor! Voices that are audible!

The queen, breathless, with both hands laid upon her heart, which was one instant still, and then beat with redoubled rapidity, listened with strained attention to the opening of the door of the anteroom. Princess Elizabeth approached her, and laid her hand on the queen's shoulder. The two children, terrified by some cause which they could not comprehend, clung to the hand and the body of their mother, and gazed anxiously at the door.

The steps came nearer, the voices became louder. The door of the anteroom is opened—and there is the lamplighter. But it is not Toulan—no, not Toulan! It is the man who comes every day, and the two children are with him as usual.

A heavy sigh escaped from the lips of the queen, and, throwing her arms around the dauphin with a convulsive motion, she murmured:

"My son, oh, my dear son! May God take my life if He will but spare thine!"

Where was Toulan? Where had he been all this dreadful day? Where was Fidèle the brave, the indefatigable?

On the morning of the day appointed for the flight, he left his house, taking a solemn leave of his Marguerite. At this parting hour he told her for the first time that he was going to enter upon the great and exalted undertaking of freeing the queen and her children, or of dying for them. His true, brave young wife had suppressed her tears and her sighs to give him her blessing, and to tell him that she would pray for him, and that if he should perish in the service of the queen, she would die too, in order to be united with him above.

Toulan kissed the beaming eyes of his Marguerite with deep feeling, thanked her for her true-hearted resignation, and told her that he had never loved her so much as in this hour when he was leaving her to meet his death, it might be, in the service of another lady.

"At this hour of parting," he said, "I will give you the dearest and most sacred thing that I possess. Take this little gold smelling-bottle. The queen gave it to me, and upon the bit of paper that lies within it Marie Antoinette wrote with her own hand, 'Remembrancer for Fidèle.'

Fidèle is the title of honor which my queen has given me for the little service which I have been able to do for her. I leave this little gift for you as that which, next to your love, is the most sacred and precious thing to me on earth. If I die, preserve it for our son, and give it to him on the day when he reaches his majority. Tell him of the time when I made this bequest to him, in the hope that he would make himself worthy of it, and live and die as a brave son of his country, a faithful subject and servant of his king, who, God willing, will be the son of Marie Antoinette. Tell him of his father; say to him that I dearly loved you and him, but that I had devoted my life to the service of the queen, and that I gave it freely and gladly, in conformity with my oath. I have not told you about these things before, dear Marguerite—not because I doubted your fidelity, but because I did not want you to have to bear the dreadful burden of expectation, and because I did not want to trouble your noble soul with these things. And now I only tell you this much: I am going away to try to save the queen. If I succeed, I shall come back for a moment this evening at ten o'clock. If I remain away, if you hear nothing from me during the whole night, then—"

"Then what?" asked Marguerite, throwing her arms around him, and looking into his face anxiously. "Say, what then?"

"Then I shall have died," he said, softly, "and our child will be an orphan! Do not weep, Marguerite! Be strong and brave, show a cheerful face to our neighbors, our friends, and the spies! But observe every thing! Listen to every thing! Keep the outer door open all the time, that I may be able to slip in at any moment. Have the little secret door in my room open too, and the passageway down into the cellar always free, that I may slip down there if need be. Be ready to receive me at any time, to hide me, and, it may possibly be, others who may come with me!"

"I shall expect you day and night," she whispered, "so long as I live!"

"And now, Marguerite," he said, pressing her tenderly to his heart, "one last kiss! Let me kiss your eyes, your beautiful dear eyes, which have always glanced with looks of love, and which have always given me new inspiration. Farewell, my dear wife, and God bless you for your love and fidelity!"

"Do not go, my precious one! Come once more to the cradle of our boy and give him a parting kiss!"

"No, Marguerite, that would unman me, and to-day I must be strong and master of myself. Farewell, I am going to the Temple!"

And, without looking at his wife again, he hurried out into the street, and turned his steps toward his destination. But just as he was turning the very next corner Lepitre met him, pale, and displaying great excitement in his face.

"Thank God!" he said, "thank God that I have found you. I wanted to hasten to you. We must flee directly—all is discovered. Immediate flight alone can save us!"

"What is discovered?" asked Toulan. "Speak, Lepitre, what is discovered?"

"For God's sake, let us not be standing here on the streets!" ejaculated Lepitre. "They have certainly sent out the constables to arrest us. Let us go into this house here, it contains a passage through to the next street. Now, listen! We are reported. Simon's wife has carried our names to the Committee of Public Safety as suspicious persons. Tison's wife has given out that the queen and her sister-in-law have won us both over, and that through our means she is kept informed about every thing that happens. The carpet-manufacturer, Arnault, has just been publicly denouncing us both, saying that Simon's wife has reported to him that we both have conducted conversation with the prisoners in low tones of voice, and have thereby been the means of conveying some kind of cheering information to the queen.* On that, our names were stricken from the list of official guards at the Temple, and we are excluded from the new ward committee that is forming to-day."

"And is that all?" asked Toulan, calmly. "Is that all the bad news that you bring? Then the projected flight is not discovered, is it? Nothing positive is known against us? Nothing more is known than the silly and unfounded denunciations of two old women?"

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* Literally reproduced here.—See Goncourt, "Histoire de Marie Antoinette," p. 290.

"For God's sake, do not use such idle words as these!" replied Lepitre. "We are suspected, our names are stricken from the ward list. Is not that itself a charge against us? And are not those who come under suspicion always condemned? Do not laugh, Toulan, and shake your head! Believe me, we are lost if we do not flee; if we do not leave Paris on the spot and conceal ourselves somewhere. I am firmly resolved on this, and in an hour I shall have started, disguised as a *sans-culotte.* Follow my example, my friend. Do not throw away your life foolhardily. Follow me!"

"No," said Toulan, "I shall stay. I have sworn to devote my life to the service of the queen, and I shall fulfil my oath so long as breath remains in my body. I must not go away from here so long as there is a possibility of assisting her. If flight is impracticable to-day, it may be effected at some more favorable time, and I must hold myself in readiness for it."

"But they will take you, I tell you," said Lepitre, with a downcast air. "You will do no good to the queen, and only bring yourself to harm."

"Oh, nonsense! they will not catch me so soon," said Toulan, confidently. "Fortune always favors the bold, and I will show you that I am brave. Go, my friend, save yourself, and may God give you long life and a contented heart! Farewell, and be careful that they do not discover you!"

"You are angry with me, Toulan," said Lepitre. "You consider me cowardly. But I tell you, you are foolhardy, and your folly will plunge you into destruction."

"I am not angry with you, Lepitre, and you shall not be with me. Every one must do as best he can, and as his heart and his head dictate to him. One is not the better for this, and another the worse. Farewell, my friend! Take care for your own safety, for it is well that some faithful ones should still remain to serve the queen, and I know that you will serve her when she needs your help."

"Then give me your hand in parting, my friend. And if at last you come to the conclusion to flee, come to Normandy, and in the village of Lerne, near Dieppe, you will find me, and my father will receive you, and you shall be treated as if you were my brother."

"Thanks, my friend, thanks! One last shake of the hand. There! Now you are away, and I remain here."

Toulan went out into the street, walked along with a cheerful face, and repaired at once to the hall where the Committee of Safety were sitting.

"Citizens and brothers," he said, in a loud, bold voice, "I have just been informed that I have been brought under suspicion and denounced. Friends have warned me to betake to flight. But I am no coward, I have no bad conscience, and therefore do not fly, but come here and ask you is this true? Is it possible that you regard me as no patriot, and as a traitor?"

"Yes," answered President Hobart, with a harsh, hard voice, "you are under suspicion, and we mistrust you. This shameful seducer, this she-wolf Marie Antoinette has cast her foxy eyes upon you, and would doubtless succeed if you are often with her. We have therefore once for all taken your name from the list of the official guards in the Temple, and you will no longer be exposed to the wiles of the Austrian woman. But besides this, as the second denunciation has been made against you to-day, and as it is asserted that you are in relations with aristocrats and suspected persons, we have considered it expedient, in view of the common safety, to issue a warrant for your apprehension. An officer has just gone with two soldiers to your house, to arrest you and bring you hither. You have simply anticipated the course of law by surrendering yourself. Officer, soldiers, here!"

The persons summoned appeared, and put Toulan under arrest, preparatory to taking him to prison.

"It is well," said Toulan, with a noble calmness. "I know that the time will come when you will regret having so abused a true patriot; and I hope, for the peace of your consciences, that there will be a time then to undo the evil which you are doing to me to-day, and that my head will then be on my shoulders, that my lips may be able to testify to you what my heart now dictates, that I forgive you! You are in error about me, yet I know that you are acting not out of enmity to me, but for the weal of the country, and out of love for the great, united republic. As the true and tenderly loving son of this noble, exalted mother, I forgive you for giving ear to my unrighteous accusers, and, even if you shed my innocent blood, my dying wish will be a blessing on the republic."

"Those are noble and excellent words," said Hobart, coldly. "But if deeds speak in antagonism to words, we cannot let the latter beguile us out of our sense, but we must give heed to justice."

"That is the one only thing that I ask," cried Toulan, brightly. "Let justice be done, my brothers, and I shall very soon be free, and shall come out from an investigation like a spotless lamb. I make no resistance. Come, my friends, take me to prison! I only ask for permission to be escorted first to my house, to procure a few articles of clothing to use during my imprisonment. But I urge pressingly that my articles may be sealed up in my presence. For when the man of the house is not at home, it fares badly with the safety of his property, and I shall be able to feel at ease only when the seal of the republic is upon my possessions. I beg you therefore to allow my paper and valuables to be sealed in my presence. You will thus be sure that my wife and my friends have not removed any thing which might be used against me, and my innocence will shine out the more clearly. I beg you therefore to comply with my wish."

The members of the committee consulted with one another in low tones, and the chairman then announced to Toulan that his wish would be complied with, and that an escort of soldiers might accompany him to his house, to allow him to procure linen and clothing, and to seal his effects and papers in their presence.

Toulan thanked them with cheerful looks, and went out into the street between the two guards. As they were on the way to his house, he talked easily with them, laughed and joked; but in his own thoughts he said to himself, "You are lost! hopelessly lost, if you do not escape now. You are the prey of the guillotine, if the gates of the prison once close upon you; therefore escape, escape or die." While he was thus laughing and talking with the soldiers, and meanwhile thinking such solemn thoughts, his sharp black eyes were glancing in all directions, looking for a friend who might assist him out of his trouble.

And fortune sent him such a friend!—Ricard, Toulan's most trusted counsellor, the abettor of his plans.

Toulan called him with an animated face, and in loud tones told him that he had been denounced, and therefore arrested; and that he was only allowed to go to his house to procure some clothing.

"Come along, Ricard," he said. "They are going to put my effects under seal, and you have some papers and books on my writing-table. Come along, and take possession of your own things, so that they may not be sealed up as mine."

Ricard nodded assent, and a significant look told Toulan that his friend understood him, and that his meaning was, that Ricard should take possession of papers that might bring Toulan under suspicion. Continuing their walk, they spoke of indifferent matters, and at last reached Toulan's house. Marguerite met them with calm bearing. She knew that every cry, every expression of anxiety and trouble, would only imperil the condition of her husband, and her love gave her power to master herself.

"Ah! are you there, husband?" she said, with a smile, how hard to her no one knew. "You are bringing a great deal of company."

"Yes, Marguerite," said Toulan, with a smile, "and I am going to keep on with this pleasant company to prison."

"Oh!" she cried, laughing, "that is a good joke! Toulan, the best of patriots, in prison! Come, you ought not to joke about serious matters."

"It is no joke," said one of the guards, solemnly. "Citizen Toulan is arrested, and is here only to procure some articles of clothing, and have his effects put under seal."

"And to give back to his friend Ricard the books and papers that belong to him," said Toulan. "Come, let us go into my study, friends."

"There are my books and papers," cried Ricard, as they went into the next room. He sprang forward to the writing-table, seized all the papers lying upon it, and tried to thrust them into his coat-pocket. But the two soldiers checked him, and undertook to resist his movement. Ricard protested, a loud exchange of words took place—in which Marguerite had her share—insisting that all the papers on the table belonged to Ricard, and she should like to see the man who could have the impudence to prevent his taking them.

Louder and louder grew the contention; and when Ricard was endeavoring again to put the papers into his pocket, the two soldiers rushed at him to prevent it. Marguerite tried to come to his assistance, and in the effort, overthrew a little table which stood in the middle of the room, on which was a water-bottle and some glasses. The table came down, a rattle of broken glass followed, and amid the noise and outcries, the controversy and violence, no one paid attention to Toulan; no one saw the little secret door quietly open, and Toulan glide from view.

The soldiers did not notice this movement, but Marguerite and Ricard understood it well, and went on all the more eagerly with their cries and contentions, to give Toulan time to escape by the secret passage.

And they were successful. When the two guards had, after long searching, discovered the secret door through which the escape had been effected, and had rushed down the hidden stairway, not a trace of him was to be seen.

Toulan was free! Unhindered, he hastened to the little attic, which he had, some time before, hired in the house adjacent to the Temple, put on a suit of clothes which he had prepared there, and remained concealed the whole day.

As Marie Antoinette lay sleepless upon her bed in the night that followed this vain attempt at flight, and was torturing herself with anxious doubts whether Fidèle had fallen a victim to his devotion, suddenly the tones of a huntsman's horn broke the silence; Marie Antoinette raised herself up and listened. Princess Elizabeth had done the same; and with suspended breath they both listened to the long-drawn and plaintive tones which softly floated in to them on the wings of the night. A smile of satisfaction flitted over their pale, sad faces, and a deep sigh escaped from their heavy hearts.

"Thank God! he is saved," whispered Marie Antoinette.

"Is not that the melody that was to tell us that our friend is in the neighborhood?"

"Yes, sister, that is the one! So long as we hear this signal, we shall know that Toulan is living still, and that he is near us."

And in the following weeks the prisoners of the Temple often had the sad consolation of hearing the tones of Toulan's horn; but he never came to them again, he never appeared in the anteroom to keep guard over the imprisoned queen.

Toulan did not flee! He had the courage to remain in Paris; he was constantly hoping that an occasion might arise to help the queen escape; he was constantly putting himself in connection with friends for this object, and making plans for the flight of the royal captives.

But exactly what Toulan hoped for stood as a threatening phantom before the eyes of the Convention—the flight of the prisoners in the Temple. They feared the queen even behind those thick walls, behind the four iron doors that closed upon her prison! They feared still more this poor child of seven years, this little king without crown and without throne, the son of him who had been executed. The Committee of Safety knew that people were talking about the little king in the Temple, and that touching anecdotes about him were in circulation. A bold, reckless fellow had appeared who called himself a prophet, and had loudly announced upon the streets and squares, that the lilies would bloom again, and that the sons of Brutus would fall beneath the hand of the little king whose throne was in the Temple. They had, it is true, arrested the prophet and dragged him to the guillotine, but his prophecies had found an echo here and there, and an interest in the little prince had been awakened in the people. The noble and enthusiastic men known as the Girondists were deeply solicitous about the young royal martyr, and the application of this expression to the little dauphin, made in the earnest and impassioned speeches before the Convention, melted all hearers to tears and called out a deep sympathy.

The Convention saw the danger, and at once resolved to be free from it. On the 1st of July 1793, that body issued a decree with the following purport: "The Committee of

Public Safety ordains that the son of Capet be separated from his mother, and be delivered to an instructor, whom the general director of the communes shall appoint."

The queen had no suspicion of this. Now that Toulan was no longer there, no news came to her of what transpired beyond the prison, and Fidèle's horn-signals were the only sounds of the outer world that reached her ear.

The evening of the 3d of July had come. The little prince had gone to bed, and had already sunk into a deep sleep. His bed had no curtains, but Marie Antoinette had with careful hands fastened a shawl to the wall, and spread it out over the bed in such a manner that the glare of the light did not fall upon the closed eyes of the child and disturb him in his peaceful slumbers. It was ten o'clock in the evening, and the ladies had that day waited unwontedly long before going to bed. The queen and Princess Elizabeth were busied in mending the clothing of the family, and Princess Theresa, sitting between the two, had been reading to them some chapters out of the Historical Dictionary. At the wish of the queen, she had now taken a religious book, Passion Week, and was reading some hymns and prayers out of it.

Suddenly, the quick steps of several men were heard in the corridor. The bolts flew back, the doors were opened, and six officials came in.

"We are come," cried one of them, with a brutal voice, "to announce to you the order of the committee, that the son of Capet be separated from his mother and his family."

At these words the queen rose, pale with horror "They are going to take my child from me!" she cried. "No, no, that is not possible. Gentlemen, the authorities cannot think of separating me from my son. He is still so young and weak, he needs my care."

"The committee has come to this determination," answered the official, "the Convention has confirmed it, and we shall carry it into execution directly."

"I cannot allow it," cried Marie Antoinette in desperation. "In the name of Heaven, I conjure you not to be so cruel!"

Elizabeth and Theresa mingled their tears with those of the mother. All three had placed themselves before the bed of the dauphin; they clung to it, they folded their hands, they sobbed; the most touching cries, the most humble prayers trembled on their lips, but the guards were not at all moved.

"What is all this whining for?" they said. "No one is going to kill your child; give him to us of your own free will, or we shall have to take him by force."

They strode up to the bed. Marie Antoinette placed herself with extended arms before it, and held the curtain firmly; it however detached itself from the wall and fell upon the face of the dauphin. He awoke, saw what was going on, and threw himself with loud shrieks into the arms of the queen. "Mamma, dear Mamma, do not leave me!" She pressed him trembling to her bosom, quieted him, and defended him against the cruel hands that were reached out for him.

In vain, all in vain! The men of the republic have no compassion on the grief of a mother! "By free will or by force he must go with us."

"Then promise me at least that he shall remain in the tower of the Temple, that I may see him every day."

"We have nothing to promise you, we have no account at all to give you. Parbleu, how can you take on and howl so, merely because your child is taken from you? Our children have to do more than that. They have every day to have their heads split open with the balls of the enemies that you have set upon them."

"My son is still too young to be able to serve his country," said the queen, gently, "but I hope that if God permits it, he will some day be proud to devote his life to Him."

Meanwhile the two princesses, urged on by the officials, had clothed the gasping, sobbing boy. The queen now saw that no more hope remained. She sank upon a chair, and summoning all her strength, she called the dauphin to herself, laid her hands upon his shoulders, and pale, immovable, with widely-opened eyes, whose burning lids were cooled by no tear, she gazed upon the quivering face of the boy, who had fixed his great blue eyes, swimming with tears, upon the countenance of his mother.

"My child," said the queen, solemnly, "we must part.

Remember your duties when I am no more with you to remind you of them. Never forget the good God who is proving you, and your mother who is praying for you. Be good and patient, and your Father in heaven will bless you."

She bent over, and with her cold lips pressed a kiss upon the forehead of her son, then gently pushed him toward the turnkey. But the boy sprang back to her again, clung to her with his arms, and would not go.

"My son, we must obey. God wills it so."

A loud, savage laugh was heard. Shuddering, the queen turned around. There at the open door stood Simon, and with him his wife, their hard features turned maliciously toward the pale queen. The woman stretched out her brown, bare arms to the child, grasped him, and pushed him before her to the door.

"Is she to have him?" shrieked Marie Antoinette. "Is my son to remain with this woman?"

"Yes," said Simon, with a grinning smile, as he put himself, with his arms akimbo, before the queen—"yes, with this woman and with me, her husband, little Capet is to remain, and I tell you he shall receive a royal education. We shall teach him to forget the past, and only to remember that he is a child of the one and indivisible republic. If he does not come to it, he must be brought to it, and my old cobbler's straps will be good helpers in this matter."

He nodded at Marie Antoinette with a fiendish smile, and then followed the officials, who had already gone out. The doors were closed again, the bolts drawn, and within the chamber reigned the stillness of death. The two women put their arms around one another, kneeled upon the floor and prayed.

From this day on, Marie Antoinette had no hope more; her heart was broken. Whole days long she sat fixed and immovable, without paying any regard to the tender words of her sister-in-law and the caresses of her daughter, without working, reading, or busying herself in any way. Formerly she had helped to put the rooms in order, and mend the clothes and linen; now she let the two princesses do this alone and serve her.

Only for a few hours each day did her countenance lighten at all, and the power of motion return to this pale, marble figure. Those were the hours when she waited for her son, as he went with Simon every day to the upper story and the platform of the tower. She would then put her head to the door and listen to every step and all the words that he directed to the turnkey as he passed by.

Soon she discovered a means of seeing him. There was a little crack on the floor of the platform on which the boy walked. The world revolved for the queen only around this little crack, and the instant in which she could see her boy.

At times, too, a compassionate guard who had to inspect the prison brought her tidings of her son, told her that he was well, that he had learned to play ball, and that by his friendly nature he won every one's love. Then Marie Antoinette's countenance would lighten, a smile would play over her features and linger on her pale lips as long as they were speaking of her boy. But oh! soon there came other tidings about the unhappy child. His wailing tones, Simon's threats, and his wife's abusive words penetrated even the queen's apartments, and filled her with the anguish of despair. And yet it was not the worst to hear him cry, and to know that the son of the queen was treated ill; it was still more dreadful to hear him sing with a loud voice, accompanied by the laugh and the bravoes of Simon and his wife, revolutionary and obscene songs—to know that not only his body but his soul was doomed to destruction.

At first the queen, on hearing these dreadful songs, broke out into lamentations, cries, and loud threats against those who were destroying the soul of her child. Then a gradual paralysis crept over her heart, and when, on the 2d of August, she was taken from the Temple to the prison, the pale lips of the queen merely whispered, "Thank God, I shall not have to hear him sing any more!"

BOOK V.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE DEATH OF THE QUEEN.

The Bartholomew's night of the murderous Catharine de Medicis, and her mad son, Charles IX., now found in France its horrible and bloody repetition; but the night of horror which we are now to contemplate was continued on into the day, and did not shrink even before the light.

The sun shone down upon the streams of blood which flowed through the streets of Paris, and upon the pack of wild dogs that swarmed in uncounted numbers on the thoroughfares of the city, and lived on this blood, which gave back even to the tame their natural wildness. The sun shone down upon the scaffold, that rose like a threatening monster upon the Place de la Révolution, and upon the dreadful axe which daily severed so many noble forms, and then rose from the block glittering and menacing.

The sun shone on that day, too, when Marie Antoinette ascended the scaffold, as her husband had done before, and so passed to her rest, from all the pains and humiliations of her last years.

That day was the 16th of October, 1793. For four months Marie Antoinette looked forward to it as to a joyful deliverance. It was four months from the time when she was transferred from the Temple to the prison, and she knew that those who were confined in the latter place only left it to gain the freedom, not that man gives, but which God grants to the suffering—the freedom of death!

Marie Antoinette longed for the deliverance. How far behind her now lay the days of her happy, joyous youth! how long ago the time when the tall, grave woman, her face full of pride and yet of resignation, had been charming Marie Antoinette, the very impersonation of beauty, youth, and love, carrying out in Trianon the idyl of romantic country life—in the excess of her gayety going disguised to the public opera-house ball, believing herself so safe amid the French people that she could dispense with the protection of etiquette—hailed with an enthusiastic admiration then, as she was now saluted with the savage shouts of the enraged people!

No, the former queen, Marie Antoinette, who, in the gilded saloons of Versailles and in the Tuileries, had received the homage of all France, and with a smiling face and perfect grace of manner acknowledged all the tribute that was brought to her, had no longer any resemblance to the widow of Louis Capet, sitting before the revolutionary tribunal, and giving earnest answers to the questions which were put to her. She arranged her toilet that day—but how different was the toilet of the Widow Capet from that which Queen Marie Antoinette had once displayed! At that earlier time, she, the easy, light-hearted daughter of fortune, had shut herself up for hours with her intimate companion, Madame Berthier, the royal milliner, planning a new ball-dress, or a new *fichu;* or her Leonard would lavish all the resources of his fancy and his art inventing new styles of head-dress, now decorating the beautiful head of the queen with towering masses of auburn hair; now braiding it so as to make it enfold little war-ships, the sails of which were finely woven from her own locks; now laying out a garden filled with fruits and flowers, butterflies and birds of paradise.

The "Widow Capet" needed no milliner and no hairdresser in making her toilet. Her tall, slender figure was enveloped with the black woollen dress which the republic had given her at her request, that she might commemorate her deceased husband. Her neck and shoulders, which had once been the admiration of France, was now concealed by a white muslin kerchief, which her keeper Bault had given her out of sympathy. Her hair was uncovered, and fell in long, natural locks on both sides of her pale, transparent face. Her hair needed no powder now; the long, sleepless nights and the sorrowful days have whitened it more than any powder could do; and the widow of Louis Capet, though but thirty-eight years old, had the gray locks of a woman of seventy.

In this toilet Marie Antoinette appeared before the revolutionary tribunal, from the 6th to the 13th of October. Nothing royal was left about her but her look and her proud bearing.

The people, pressing in dense masses into the spectators' seats, did not weary of seeing the queen in her humiliation and in her mourning-robe, and constantly demanded that Marie Antoinette should rise from the woven rush chair on which she was sitting, that she should allow herself to be stared at by this throng, brought there not out of compassion, but curiosity.

Once, as she rose in reply to the demand of the public, she was heard to whisper, as to herself: "Ah, will this people not soon be satisfied with my sufferings?" * At another time, her pale, dry lips murmured, "I am thirsty!" but no one around her dared to have compassion on this cry of distress; every one looked perplexed at the others, and no one dared give her a glass of water. At last one of the *gens d'armes* ventured to do it, and Marie Antoinette thanked him with a look that brought tears into his eyes, and that perhaps caused him to fall on the morrow under the guillotine as a traitor.

The *gens d'armes* who guarded the queen, they alone had the courage to show her compassion. One night, when she was conducted from the session-room to her prison, Marie Antoinette felt herself so exhausted, so overcome, that she murmured to herself, as she staggered on, "I cannot see, I cannot walk any farther." † The guard who was walking by her side gave her his arm, and, supported by him, Marie Antoinette reeled up the stone steps that led to her prison.

At last, in the night intervening between the 14th and 15th of October, at four o'clock in the morning, her sentence was pronounced—"Death! execution by the guillotine!"

Marie Antoinette received it with unshakable calmness, while the tumult of the excited mob was hushed as by magic, and while many faces even of the exasperated fishwives grew pale!

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* Marie Antoinette's own words.—See Goncourt, "Histoire de Marie Antoinette," p. 404.

† Goncourt, p. 415.

Marie Antoinette remained calm; gravely and coldly she rose from her seat, and with her own hands opened the balustrade in order to leave the hall to return to her prison!

Finally, on the morning of the 16th of October, her sufferings were allowed to end, and she was permitted to take refuge in the grave. It almost made her joyful; she had suffered so much, that to die was for her really blessedness.

She employed the still hours of the night before her death in writing to her sister-in-law, Madame Elizabeth, and her letter was at the same time her testament. But the widow of Louis Capet had no riches, no treasures to convey. She had nothing more that she could call her own but her love, her tears, and her farewell greetings. These she left to all who had loved her. She sent a special word to her brothers and sisters, and bade them farewell.

"I had friends," she says, "and the thought that I am to be forever separated from them, and their sorrow for me, is the most painful thing in this hour; they shall at least know that I thought of them to the last moment."

After Marie Antoinette had ended this letter, whose writing was here and there blotted with her tears, she turned her thoughts to the last remembrances she could leave to her children—a remembrance which should not be profaned by the hand of the executioner. This was her long hair, whose silver locks, the only ornament that remained to her, was at the same time the sad record of her sorrows.

Marie Antoinette, with her own hands, despoiled herself of this ornament, and cut off her long back-hair, that it might be a last gift to her children, her relations, and friends. Then, after a period of meditation, she prepared herself for the last great ceremony of her career—her death. She felt herself exhausted, worn out, and recognized her need of some physical support during the hard way which lay before her. She asked for nourishment, and ate with some relish the wing of a fowl that was brought to her. After that she made her toilet—the toilet of death!

MARIE ANTOINETTE LEAVING THE TRIBUNAL.

At the request of the queen, the wife of the turnkey gave her one of her own chemises, and Marie Antoinette put it on. Then she arrayed herself in the same garments which she had worn at her trial, with this single change—that over the black woollen dress, which she had often mended with her own hand, she now wore a cloak of white *piqué*. Around her neck she tied a simple kerchief of white muslin, and as she would not be allowed to ascend the scaffold with uncovered head, she put on a plain linen cap, such as was in general use among the people. Black stockings covered her feet, and over these were shoes of black woollen stuff.

Her toilet was at last ended; she was done with all earthly things! Ready to meet her death, she lay down on her bed and slept.

She was still sleeping when it was announced to her that a priest was there, ready to meet her, if she wanted to confess. But Marie Antoinette had already unveiled her heart before God: she wanted none of those priests of reason whom the republic had appointed after it had banished or guillotined the priests of the Church.

"As I am not mistress of my own will," she had written to her sister Elizabeth, "I shall have to submit if a priest is brought to me; but I solemnly declare that I will not speak a word to him, and that I shall treat him as a person with whom I wish to have no relations."

And Marie Antoinette kept her word; she did not refuse to allow Geroid to enter; but when he asked her if she wished to receive the consolations of religion from him, she declined.

Then, in order to warm her feet, which were cold, she walked up and down her little room. As it struck seven the door opened. It was Samson, the public executioner, who entered!

A slight thrill passed through the form of the queen. "You have come very early, sir; could you not delay a little?" When Samson denied her request, Marie Antoinette put on her calm, cold manner. She drank, without resistance, a cup of chocolate which was brought to her; she remained possessed, and wore her wonted air of dignity as they bound her hands behind her with thick cords.

At eleven o'clock she left her room, passed through the corridor, and ascended the car, which was waiting for her before the prison door. No one accompanied her, no one bade her a last farewell, not a look of pity or compassion was bestowed upon her by her keepers.

Alone, between the rows of *gens d'armes* that were placed along the sides of the corridor, the queen advanced, Samson walking behind her, carrying the end of the rope with which the queen's hands were bound, and behind him his two assistants and the priest. This is the retinue of the queen, the daughter of an emperor, on the way to her execution!

It may be, that at this hour thousands are on their knees, offering their fervent prayers to God in behalf of Marie Antoinette, whom, in their hearts, they continued to call "the queen;" it may be that thousands are pouring out tears of compassion for her who now mounts the wretched car, and sits down on the board which is bound by ropes to the sides of the vehicle. But those who are praying and weeping have withdrawn to the solitude of their own apartments, and only God can see their tears and hear their cries. The eyes which witnessed the queen in this last drive were not allowed to shed a tear; the words which followed her on her last way could express no compassion.

All Paris knew the hour of the execution, and the people were ready to witness it. On the streets, at the windows, on the roofs, immense masses had congregated, and the whole Place de la Révolution (now the Place de la Concorde) was filled with a dark, surging crowd.

And now the drums of the guards stationed before the Conciergerie began to beat. The great white horse, (which drew the car in which the queen sat, side by side with the priest, and facing backward,) was driven forward by a man who was upon his back. Behind Marie Antoinette were Samson and his assistants.

The queen was pale, all the blood had left her cheeks and lips, but her eyes were red! Poor queen, she bore even then the marks of much weeping! But she could shed no tears then! Not a single one obscured her eye as her look ranged, gravely and calmly, over the mass, up the houses to the very roofs, then slowly down, and then away over the boundless sea of human faces.

Her face was as cold and grave as her eyes, her lips were firmly compressed; not a quiver betrayed whether she was suffering, and whether she shrank from the thousand and ten thousand scornful and curious looks which were fixed upon her. And yet Marie Antoinette saw it all! She saw a woman raise a child, she saw the child throw her a kiss with its little hand! At that the queen gave way for an instant, her lips quivered, her eyes were darkened with a tear! This solitary sign of human sympathy reanimated the heart of the queen, and gave her a little fresh life.

But the people took good care that Marie Antoinette should not carry this one drop of comfort to the end of her journey. The populace thronged around the car, howled, groaned, sang ribald songs, clapped their hands, and pointed their fingers in derision at Madame Veto.

The queen, however, remained calm, her gaze wandering coldly over the vast multitude; only once did her eye flash on the route. It was as she passed the Palais Royal, where Philippe Egalité, once the Duke d'Orleans, lived, and read the inscription which he had caused to be placed over the main entrance of the palace.

At noon the car reached its destination. It came to a halt at the foot of the scaffold; Marie Antoinette dismounted, and then walked slowly and with erect head up the steps.

Not once during her dreadful ride had her lips opened, not a complaint had escaped her, not a farewell had she spoken. The only adieu which she had to give on earth was a look—one long, sad look—directed toward the Tuileries; and as she gazed at the great pile her cheeks grew paler, and a deep sigh escaped from her lips.

Then she placed her head under the guillotine,—a momentary, breathless silence followed.

Samson lifted up the pale head that had once belonged to the Queen of France, and the people greeted the sight with the cry, "Long live the republic!"

That same evening one of the officials of the republic made up an account, now preserved in the Imperial Library of Paris, and which must move even the historian himself to tears. It runs as follows: "Cost of interment, conducted by Joly, sexton of Madelaine de la Ville l'Eveque, of persons condemned by the Tribunal of the Committee of Safety, to wit, No. 1 . . . ." Then follow twenty-four names and numbers, and then "No. 25. Widow Capet:

For the coffin,	6 francs.
For digging the grave,	25 francs."

Beneath are the words, "Seen and approved by me, President of the Revolutionary Tribunal, that Joly, sexton of the Madelaine, receive the sum of two hundred and sixty-four francs from the National Treasury, Paris, 11th Brumaire. Year II. of the French Republic. Herman, President."

The interment of the Queen of France did not cost the republic more than thirty-one francs, or six American dollars.

CHAPTER XXV.

KING LOUIS THE SEVENTEENTH.

The "one and indivisible republic" had gained the victory over the lilies of France. In their dark and unknown graves, in the Madelaine churchyard, King Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette slept their last sleep. The monarchy had perished on the guillotine, and the republicans, the preachers of liberty, equality, and fraternity, repeated triumphantly: "Royalty is forever extinguished, and the glorious republic is the rising sun which is to bring eternal deliverance to France."

But, in spite of this jubilant cry, the foreheads of the republican leaders darkened, and a peculiar solicitude took possession of their hearts when their eyes fell upon the Temple—that great, dismal building, that threw its dark shadows over the sunny path of the republic. Was it regret that darkened the brows of the regicides as they looked upon this building, which had been the sad prison of the king and queen? Those hearts of bronze knew no regret; and when the heroes of the revolution crossed the

Place de la Guillotine, on which the royal victims had perished, their eyes flashed more proudly, and did not fall even when they passed by the Madelaine churchyard.

No, it was not the recollection of the deed that saddened the brows of the potentates of the republic when they looked at the dismal Temple, but the recollection of him who was not yet dead, but who was still living as a captive in the gloomy state-prison of the republic.

This prisoner was indeed only a child of eight years, but the legitimists—and there were many of them still in the country—called him the King of France; and priests in loyal Vendée, when they had finished the daily mass for the murdered king, prayed to God, with uplifted hands, for grace and deliverance for the young captive at the Temple, the young king, Louis XVII.

"*Le roi est mort—Vive le roi!*"

There were, it must be confessed, among the royalists and legitimists many who thought of the young prisoner with bitterness and anger, and who accused and blamed him as the calumniator of his mother! As if the child knew what he was doing when, at the command of his tormentor Simon, he wrote with trembling hand his name upon the paper which was laid before him in the open court. As if the poor innocent boy knew what meaning the dreadful questions had, which the merciless judges put to him, and which he answered with no, or with yes, according as his scrutinizing looks were able to make out the fitting answer on the hard face of Simon, who stood near him. For the unhappy lad had already learned to read the face of the turnkey, and knew very well that every wrinkle of the forehead which was caused by him must be atoned for with dreadful sufferings, abuses, and blows.

The poor boy was afraid of the heavy fist that came down like an iron club upon his back and even on his face, when he said any thing or did any thing that displeased Simon or his wife; and therefore he sought to escape this cruel treatment, confirming with his yes and no what Simon told the judges, and what the child in his innocence did not understand! And therefore he subscribed the paper without reluctance in which he unconsciously gave evidence that disgraced his mother.

With this testimony they ventured to accuse Marie Antoinette of infamy, but the queen gave it no other answer than scornful silence and a proud and dignified look, before which the judges cast down their eyes in shame. Then after a pause they repeated their question, and demanded an answer.

Marie Antoinette turned her proud and yet gentle glance to the women who had taken possession in dense masses of the spectators' gallery, and who breathlessly awaited the answer of the queen.

"I appeal to all mothers present," she said, with her sad, sonorous voice—"I ask whether they hold such a crime to be possible."

No one gave audible reply, but a murmur passed through the ranks of the spectators, and the sharp ear of the judges understood very well the meaning of this sound, this language of sympathy, and it seemed to them wiser to let the accusation fall rather than rouse up the compassion of the mothers still more in behalf of the queen. Her condemnation was an event fixed upon, the "guilty" had been spoken in the hearts of the judges long before it came to their lips, and brought the queen to the guillotine.

Marie Antoinette referred to this dreadful charge in the letter which she wrote to her sister-in-law Elizabeth in the night before her execution, a letter which was at the same time her testament and her farewell to life.

"May my son," she wrote, "never forget the last words of his father! I repeat them to him here expressly: 'May he never seek to avenge our death!' And now I have to speak of a matter which surely grieves my heart. I know what trouble this child must have occasioned you. Forgive him, my dear sister; think how young he is, and how easy it is to induce a child to say what people want to have him say, and what he does not understand. The day will come, I hope, when he shall better comprehend the high value of your goodness and tenderness to both of my children." *

At the same hour when Marie Antoinette was writing this, there was a dispute between Simon and his wife, who had been ordered by the Convention to watch that night,

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* Beauchesne, "Louis XVII., sa Vie, son Agonie," etc., vol. ii., p. 156, facsimile of Marie Antoinette's letter.

in order that the enraged legitimists might not make an effort to abduct the son of the queen. They were contending whether the execution would really occur the next day. Simon, in a jubilant tone, declared his conviction that it would, while his wife doubted. "She is still handsome," she said, gloomily, "she knows how to talk well, and she will be able to move her judges, for her judges are men."

"But Justice is a woman, and she is unshakable," cried Simon emphatically, and as his wife continued to contradict, Simon proposed a bet. The wager was, that if the Queen of France should be guillotined the next noon, the one who lost should furnish brandy and cakes the next evening for a jollification.

The next morning Simon repaired with the little prisoner to the platform of the tower, from which there was a free lookout over the streets, and where they could plainly see what was going on below.

His wife meanwhile had left the Temple at early dawn with her dreadful knitting-work. "I must be on the spot early if I want a good place to-day," she said, "and it would be a real misfortune for me, if I should not see the miserable head of the she-wolf drop, and not make a double stitch in my stocking."

"But you forget, Jeanne Marie," said Simon, with a grin, "you forget that you lose your bet if you make the mark in your stocking."

"I would rather lose all the bets that were ever made than not make the mark in my stocking," cried the knitter, grimly. "I would rather lose my wedding-dress and my marriage-ring than win this bet. Go up to the platform with the young wolf, and wait for me there. As soon as I have made the mark in my stocking, I will run home and show it to you."

"It is too bad that I cannot go with you," said Simon, sighing. "I wish I had never undertaken the business of bringing up the little Capet. It is hateful work, for I can never leave the Temple, and I am just as much a prisoner as he is."

"The republic has done you a great honor," said the knitter, solemnly. "She has confidence that you will make out of the son of the she-wolf, out of the worthless scion of tyrants, a son of the republic, a useful citizen."

"Good talk," growled Simon, "and you have only the honor of the affair, and the satisfaction besides of plaguing the son of our tyrants a bit."

"Of taking revenge," struck in the knitter—"revenge for the misery which my family has suffered from the tyrants."

"But I," continued Simon, "I have certainly the honor of the thing, but I have also the burden. In the first place, it is very hard to make a strong and useful citizen of the republic out of this whining, tender, and sensitive urchin. And then again it is very unpleasant and disagreeable to have to live like a prisoner always."

"Listen, Simon, hear what I promise you," said Jeanne Marie, laying her hard brown hand upon Simon's shoulder. "If the Austrian atones to-day for her crimes, and the executioner shows her head to the avenged people, I will give up my place at the guillotine as a knitter, will remain with you here in the Temple, will take my share in the bringing up of the little Capet, and you yourself shall make the proposition to the supervisor, that your wife like yourself shall not be allowed to leave the Temple."

"That is something I like to hear," cried Simon, delighted; "there will then be at least two of us to bear the tedium of imprisonment. So go, Jenne Marie, take your place for the last time at the guillotine, for I tell you, you will lose your bet; you will have to furnish brandy and cakes, and stay with me here at the Temple to bring up the little Capet. So go, I will go up to the platform with the boy, and wait there for your return."

He called the little Louis Charles, who was sitting on the tottering rush-chair in his room, and anxiously waiting to see whether "his master" was going to take him that day out of the dismal, dark prison.

"Come, little Capet," cried Simon, pushing the door open with his foot—"come, we will go up on the platform. You can take your ball along and play, and I advise you to be right merry to-day, for it is a holiday for the republic, and I am going to teach you to be a good republican. So if you want to keep your back free from my straps, be jolly to-day, and play with your ball."

"Oh!" cried the child, springing forward merrily with his ball—"oh! only be good, master, I will certainly be merry, for I like to play with my ball, and I am ever so fond of holidays. What kind of one is it to-day?"

"No matter about your knowing that, you little toad!" growled Simon, who in spite of himself had compassion on the pale face of the child that looked up to him so innocently and inquiringly. "Up the staircase quick, and play and laugh."

Louis obeyed with a smile, sprang up the high steps of the winding stairway, jumped about on the platform, throwing his ball up in the air, and shouting aloud when he caught it again with his little thin hands.

Meanwhile Simon stood leaning on the iron railing that surrounded the platform, looking with his searching eyes down into the street which far below ran between the dark houses like a narrow ribbon.

The wind now brought the sustained notes of the drums to him; then he saw the street below suddenly filled with a dark mass, as if the ribbon were turning into crape that was filling all Paris.

"The people are in motion by thousands," cried Simon, delightedly, "and all rushing to the Place de la Révolution. I shall win my bet."

And again he listened to the sound that came up to him, now resembling the beat of drums, and now a loud cry of exultation.

"Now I think Samson must be striking the head off the wolf!" growled Simon to himself, "and the people are shouting with pleasure, and Jeanne Marie is making a mark in her stocking, and I, poor fellow, cannot be there to see the fine show! And this miserable brat is to blame for it," he cried aloud, turning suddenly round to the child who was playing behind him with his ball, and giving him a savage blow with his fist.

"You are the cause, stupid, that I cannot be there today!"

"Master," said the child, beseechingly, lifting his great blue eyes, in which the tears were standing, up to his tormentor—"master, I beg your forgiveness if I have troubled you."

"Yes, you have troubled me," growled Simon, "and you shall get your thanks for it in a way you will not like. Quick, away with your tears, go on with your play if you do not want your back to make acquaintance with my straps. Merry, I say, little Capet, merry!"

The boy hastily dried his tears, laughed aloud as a proof of his merriment, and began to jump about again and to play with his ball.

Simon listened again, and looked down longingly into the streets, which were now black with the surging masses of men. Steps were now heard upon the stairway, and Jeanne Marie presently appeared on the platform. With a grave, solemn air she walked up to her husband, and gave him her stocking, on which three great drops of blood were visible.

"That is her blood," she said, calmly. "Thank God, I have lost the bet!"

"What sort of a bet was it?" asked the boy, with a smile, and giving his ball a merry toss.

"The bet is nothing to you," answered Jeanne Marie, "but if you are good you will get something by and by, and have a share in the payment of the bet!"

That evening there was a little feast prepared in the gloomy rooms of the Simons. The wife paid the wager, for the Queen of France had really been executed, and she had lost. She provided two bottles of brandy and a plum cake, and the son of the murdered queen had a share in the entertainment. He ate a piece of the plum cake, and, under the fear of being beaten if he refused, he drank some of the brandy that was so offensive to him.

From this time the unhappy boy remained under the hands of the cobbler and his cruel wife. In vain his aunt and his sister implored their keepers to be allowed to see and to talk with the prince. They were put off with abusive words, and only now and then could they see him a moment through a crack in the door, as he passed by with Simon, on his way to the winding staircase. At times there came up through the floor of their room—for Simon, who was no longer porter, had the rooms directly beneath these occupied by the princesses—the crying and moaning of the little prince, filling their hearts with pain and bitterness, for they knew that the horrible keeper of the dauphin was giving his pitiable ward a lesson, *i.e.*, he was beating and maltreating him. Why? For what reason? One day, perhaps, because he refused to drink brandy, the next because he looked sad, or because he asked to be taken to his mother or the princesses, or because he refused to sing the ribald songs which Simon tried to teach him about Madame Veto or the Austrian she-wolf.

In this one thing the boy remained immovable; neither threats, abuse, nor blows would force him to sing scurrilous songs about his mother. Out of fear he did every thing else that his tormentor bade him. He sung the *Marseillaise*, and the *Ça ırā*, he danced the *Carmagnole*, uttered his loud hurrahs as Simon drank a glass of brandy to the weal of the one and indivisible republic; but when he was ordered to sing mocking songs about Madame Veto, he kept a stubborn silence, and nothing was able to overcome what Simon called the "obstinacy of the little viper."

Nothing, neither blows nor kicks, neither threats nor promises! The child no longer ventured to ask after its mother, or to beg to be taken to his aunt and sister, but once in a while when he heard a noise in the room above, he would fix his eyes upon the ceiling for a long time, and with an expression of longing, and when he dropped them again the clear tears ran over his cheeks like transparent pearls.

He did not speak about his mother, but he thought of her, and once in the night he seemed to be dreaming of her, for he raised himself up in bed, kneeled down upon the miserable, dirty mattress, folded his hands and began to repeat in a loud voice the prayer which his mother had taught him.

The noise awakened Simon, who roused his wife, to let her listen to the "superstitious little monkey," whom he would cure forever of his folly.

He sprang out of bed, took a pitcher of cold water, that was standing on the table, and poured it upon the head of the kneeling boy. Louis Charles awoke with a shriek, and crouched down in alarm. But the whole bed was wet, only the pillow had been spared. The boy rose carefully, took the pillow, carried it into a corner of the room, and sat down upon it. But his teeth chattered with the cold in spite of himself. This awakened Simon a second time, just as he was dropping asleep. With a wild curse he jumped out of bed and dressed himself.

"That is right!" cried Jeanne Marie, "bring the brat to his senses. Make little Capet know that he is to behave respectfully."

And Simon did make the poor boy understand it, sitting on the pillow, shivering in his wet shirt. He seized him by his shoulders, shook him angrily from one side to another, and shouted: "I will teach you to say your *Pater Noster*, and get up in the night like a Trappist!"

The boy remaining silent, Simon's rage, which knew no bounds when he thought he was defied or met with stubbornness, entirely took possession of him. He caught up his boot, whose sole was secured with large iron nails, and was on the point of hurling it at the head of the unoffending boy, when the latter seized his arm with convulsive energy.

"What have I done to you, master, that you should kill me?" cried the little Louis.

"Kill you, you wolf-brat!" roared Simon. "As if I wanted to, or ever had wanted to! Oh, the miserable viper! So you do not know that if I only took fairly hold of your neck, you never would scream again!"

And with his powerful arm he seized the boy and hurled him upon the water-soaked bed. Louis lay down without a word, without a complaint, and remained there shivering and with chattering teeth until morning.*

From this period there was a change in the boy. Until this time his moist eyes had fixed themselves with a supplicating look upon his tormentors when they threatened him, but after this they were cast down. Until now he had always sought to fulfil his master's commands with great alacrity; afterward he was indifferent, and made no effort to do so, for he had learned that it was all to no purpose, and that he must accept a fate of slavery and affliction. The face of the child, once so rosy and smiling, now took on a sad, melancholy expression, his cheeks were pale and sunken. The attractive features of his face were disfigured, his limbs grew to a length disproportionate to his age; his back bent into a bow, as if he felt the burden of the humiliations which were thrown upon him. When the child had learned that every thing that he said was twisted, turned into ridicule, and made the cause of chastisement, he was entirely silent, and only with the greatest pains could a word be drawn from him.

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* Beauchesne, "Louis XVII.," vol. ii., p. 185.

This silence exasperated Simon, and made him furiously command the boy to sing, laugh, and be merry. At other times he would order Louis to be silent and motionless for hours, and to have nothing to do with the bird-cage, which was on the table, and which was the only thing left that the little fellow could enjoy.

This cage held a number of birds, and a piece of mechanism, an automaton in the form of a bird, which ate like a living creature, drank, hopped from one bar to another, opened his bill, and sang the air which was so popular before the revolution, "Oh, Richard! oh, my king!"

This article had been found among the royal apparel, and a compassionate official guard had told Simon about it, and induced him to apply to the authorities in charge of the Temple and ask for it for the little Capet.

Simon, who, as well as his wife, could no more leave the building than their prisoner could, took this solitary, confined life very seriously, and longed for some way to mitigate the tedium. He therefore availed himself gladly of the official's proposition, and asked for the automaton, which was granted by the authorities. The boy was delighted with the toy at first, and a pleased smile flitted over his face. But he soon became tired of playing with the thing and paid no attention to it.

"Does not your bird please you any longer?" asked Miller, the official, as he came one day to inspect the Temple. "Do you have no more sport with your canary?"

The boy shook his head, and as Simon was in the next room and so could not strike him, he ventured to speak.

"It is no bird," he answered softly and quickly. "But I should like to have a bird."

The good inspector nodded to the boy, and then went out to have a long talk with Simon, and so to avert any suspicion of being too familiar with, or too fond of, the prince. But after leaving the Temple he went to his friends and acquaintances, and told them, with tears in his eyes, about the little prisoner in the Temple, the "dauphin," as the royalists used always to call him beneath their breath, and how he wanted a living bird. Every one was glad to have an opportunity of gratifying the wish of the dauphin, and on the next day Miller brought the prince a cage, in which were fourteen real canaries.

"Ah! those are real birds," cried the child, as he took them one after the other and kissed them. The playing of the birds, which all lived in one great cage, together with the automaton, was now the only pleasure of the boy. He began to tame them, and among the little feathered flock he found one to which he was especially drawn, because he was more quiet than the others, allowed itself to be easily caught, sat still on the finger of the prince, and, turning his little black eyes to the boy, warbled a little, sweet melody. At such moments the countenance of the boy beamed as it had done in the days of his happiness; his cheeks flushed with color, and out of his large blue eyes, which rested with inexpressible tenderness upon the bird, there issued the rays of intelligence and sensibility. He had now something to love, something to which all his gentle sympathies could flow out, which hitherto had all been suppressed beneath the harsh treatment of his keepers.

He was no longer alone, he was no longer joyless! His little friend was there in the great cage among the twittering companions who were indifferent to the little prince. In order to know him at first sight, and always to be able to recognize him, Louis took the rose-colored ribbon from the neck of the automaton, and tied it around the neck of his darling. The bird sang merrily at this, and seemed to be as well pleased with the decoration as if it had been an order which King Louis of France was hanging around the neck of a favorite courtier.

It was a fortunate thing for the boy that Simon himself was fond of birds, else the objections of his wife would soon have robbed the little fellow of his last-remaining comfort. It was for the keeper a little source of amusement, an interruption in the dreadful monotony of his life. The birds were allowed to stay therefore, and their singing and twittering animated a little the dark, silent rooms, and reminded him of the spring, the fresh air, the green trees!

But very soon this source of comfort and cheer was to be banished from the dismal place! On the 19th of December, 1793, the inspectors of the Temple made their rounds. Just at the moment when they entered the room of the little Louis Capet, the automaton began to sing with his loud, penetrating voice, "Oh! Richard, oh my king!"

The officials came to a halt upon the threshold, as though petrified at this unheard-of license, and fixed their cold, angry looks now upon the birds, now upon the boy, who was sitting upon his rush-chair before the cage, looking at the birds with beaming eyes.

A second time the automaton began the unfortunate air, and the exasperated inspectors strode up to the cage.

"What does this mean?" asked one of them. "How does any one dare to keep up, in the glorious republic, such worthless reminders of the cursed monarchy."

"Only see," cried another—"see the order that one of the birds is wearing. It is plain that the old passion of royalty still lurks here, for even here ribbons are given away as signs of distinction. The republic forbids such things, and we will not suffer such infamy."

The inspector put his hand into the cage, seized the little canary-bird with the red ribbon, and squeezed him so closely that the poor little creature gave one faint chirp and died. The man drew him out, and hurled him against the wall of the room.

The little boy said not a word, he uttered not a complaint; he gazed with widely-opened eyes at his dead favorite, and two great tears slowly trickled down his pale cheeks.

The next day the inspectors gave a report of this occurrence, couched in terms of worthy indignation, and all hearts were stirred with righteous anger at the story of the automaton that sang the royal aria, and of the living bird that wore the badge of an order about its neck. They were convinced that the secret royalists were connected with this thing, and it was registered in the communal acts as "the conspiracy of the canary-bird."

The little winged conspirators, the automaton as well as the living birds, were of course instantly removed from the Temple; and Simon had the double vexation of receiving a reprimand from the authorities, and then the losing his little merry companions from the prison. It was all the fault of this little, good-for-nothing boy, who knew how to make long faces, and allowed himself to waken and disturb his master in the night by his crying and sobbing.

"The worthless viper has spoiled my sleep for me," growled Simon the next morning. "My head is as heavy as a bomb, and I shall have to take a foot-bath, to draw the blood away from my ears."

Jeanne Marie silently carried her husband the leaden foot-bath, with the steaming water, and then drew back into the corner, in whose dismal shadow she often sat for hours, gazing idly at her "calendar of the revolution," the long stocking, on which traces of the blood of the queen were still visible.

Meanwhile, Simon took his foot-bath, and while he did so, his wicked, malicious eyes now fell upon his wife, who had once been so cheerful and resolute, and who now had grown so sad and broken, now upon the boy, who, since yesterday, when his canaries had been taken from him, had spoken not a word, or made a sound, and who sat motionless upon the rush-chair, folding his hands in his lap, and gazing at the place where his dead bird lay yesterday.

"This life would make one crazy," growled Simon, with the tone of a hyena. "Capet," he cried aloud, "take the towel and warm it at the chimney-fire, so as to wipe my feet."

Louis rose slowly from his chair, took the towel and crept to the chimney-fire to spread it out and warm it; but the glow of the coals burned his little thin hands so badly, that he let the cloth fall into the fire, and before the trembling, frightened child had time to draw it back, the towel had kindled and was burning brightly.

Simon uttered a howl of rage, and, as with his feet in the water he was not able to reach the boy, he heaped curses and abuse upon him, and not alone on him, but on his father and mother, till his voice was hoarse, and he was exhausted with this outpouring of his wrath.

Deceived by the quiet which followed, little Louis took another towel, warmed it carefully at the chimney, and then cautiously approached his master, to wipe his feet. Simon extended them to the boy and let himself be served as if by a little slave; but just as soon as his feet were dry he kicked the boy's head with such force that without a cry Louis fell down, striking his head violently on the floor. Perhaps it was this pitiful spectacle that exasperated the cobbler still more. He beat the unconscious boy, roused him with kicks and with the noise of his curses, raised his clinched fists and swore that he would now dash the viper in pieces, when he suddenly felt his hands grasped as in iron clamps, and to his boundless astonishment saw before him the pale, grim face of his wife, who had come out from her corner and fixed her black, glistening eyes upon him, while she held his hands firmly.

"What is it, Jeanne Marie?" said Simon, surprised! "why are you holding me so?"

"Because I do not want you to beat him to death," she said, with a hoarse, rough voice.

He broke out into loud laughter. "I really believe that the knitter of the guillotine has pity on the son of the she-wolf."

A convulsive quiver passed through her whole frame. A singular, gurgling sound came from her chest; she put both her hands to her neck and tore the little kerchief off, as if it were tied tight enough to strangle her.

"No," she said, in a suppressed tone, "no compassion on the wolf's brood! But if you beat him to death, they will have to bring you to the guillotine, that it may not appear as if they had ordered you to kill the little Capet."

"True," said Simon, "you are right, and I thank you, Jeanne Marie, that you may remind me of it. It shows that you love me still, although you are always so quiet. Yes, yes, I will be more careful; I will take care to beat the little serpent only so much that it may not bite, but cannot die."

Jeanne Marie made no reply, but sat down in the corner again, and took up her stocking, without touching the needles, however, and going on with her work.

"Get up, you cursed snake!" growled Simon, "get up and go out of my sight, and do not stir me up again."

The child rose slowly from the floor, crept to the wash-basin and with his trembling, bruised hands wiped away the blood that was flowing out of his nose and mouth.

A loud, gurgling sound came from the corner where Jeanne Marie sat. It seemed half like a cry, half like a sob. When Simon looked around, his wife lay pale and motionless on the floor; she had sunk from her chair in a swoon.

Simon grasped her in his strong arms and carried her to the bed, laid her gently and carefully down, and busied himself about her, showing a manifest anxiety.

"She must not die," he murmured, rubbing her temples with salt water; "she must not leave me alone in this horrible prison and with this dreadful child.—Jeanne Marie, wake up, come to yourself!" She opened her eyes, and gazed at her husband with wild, searching looks.

"What is the matter, Jeanne Marie?" he asked. "Have you pain? Are you sick?"

"Yes," she said, "I am sick, I am in pain."

"I will go to bring you a physician, you shall not die! No, no, you shall not die, you shall have a physician The Hôtel Dieu is very near, they will certainly allow me to go as far as there, and bring a doctor for my dear Jeanne."

He was on the point of hastening away, but Jeanne Marie held him fast. "Remain here," she murmured, "do not let me be alone with him—I am afraid of him!"

"Of whom?" asked Simon, astonished; and as he followed the looks of his wife, they rested on the boy, who was still busy in checking the blood that was flowing freely from his swollen nose.

"Of him!" asked Simon, in amazement.

Jeanne Marie nodded. "Yes," she whispered, "I am afraid of him, and I do not want to remain alone with him, for he would kill me." Simon burst into a loud, hoarse laugh. "Now I see that you are really sick, and the doctor shall come at once. But they certainly will not let me leave this place, for this despicable brat has made us both prisoners, the miserable, good-for-nothing thing!"

"Send him away; let him go into his own room," whispered Jeanne Marie. "I cannot bear to see him; he poisons my blood. Send him away, for I shall be crazy if I have to look at him longer."

"Away with you, you viper!" roared Simon; and the boy, who knew that he was meant—that the term viper was applied only to him—hastily dried his tears, and slipped through the open door into his little dark apartment.

"Now I will run and call the porter," said Simon, hurriedly; "he shall send some one to the Hôtel Dieu, and bring a physician for my poor, dear, sick Jeanne Marie."

He hastened out, and turned back, after a few minutes, with the report that the porter himself had gone to bring a doctor, and that help would come at once.

"Nonsense!" cried Jeanne Marie; "no doctor can help me, and there is nothing at all that I want. Only give me something to drink, Simon, for my throat burns like fire, and then call little Capet in, for in his dark room his eyes glisten like stars, and I cannot bear them."

Simon shook his head sadly; and, while holding a glass of cold water to her lips, he said to himself: "Jeanne Marie is really sick! She has a fever! But we must do what she orders, else it will come to delirium, and she might become insane."

And with a loud voice he called, "Capet, Capet! come here, come here! you viper, you wolf's cub, come here!"

The boy obeyed the command, slowly crept into the room, and sat down in the rush-chair in the corner. "He shall not look at me," shrieked Jeanne Marie; "he shall not look into my heart with his dreadful blue eyes, it hurts me—oh! so much, so much!"

"Turn around, you viper!" said Simon. "Look round this way again, or I'll tear your eyes out of your head! I—"

The door leading to the corridor now opened, and an old man, leaning on a cane, entered, wearing on his head a powdered peruke, his bent form covered with a black satin coat, beneath which a satin vest was seen; on his feet, silk stockings and buckled shoes; in his lace-encircled hand, a cane with a gold head.

"Well," cried Simon, with a laugh, "what sort of an old scarecrow is that? And what does it want here?"

"The scarecrow wants nothing of you," said the old man, in a kindly way, "but you want something of it, citizen. You have sent for me."

"Ah! so you are the doctor from the Hôtel Dieu."

"Yes, my friend, I am Citizen Naudin."

"Naudin, the chief physician at the Hôtel Dieu?" cried Simon. "And you come yourself to see my sick wife?"

"Does that surprise you, Citizen Simon?"

"Yes, indeed, it surprises me. For I have been told so often that Citizen Naudin, the greatest and most skilful physician in all Paris, never leaves the Hôtel Dieu; that the aristocrats and *ci-devants* have begged him in vain to attend them, and that even the Austrian woman, in the days when she was queen, sent to no purpose to the celebrated Naudin, and begged him to come to Versailles. We heard that the answer was: 'I am the physician of the poor and the sick in the Hôtel Dieu, and whoever is poor and sick may come to me in the house which bears the name of God. But whoever is too rich and too well for that, must seek another doctor, for my duties with the sick do not allow me to leave the Hôtel Dieu.' And after that answer reached the palace—so the great Doctor Marat told me—the queen had her horses harnessed, and drove to Paris, to consult Doctor Naudin at the Hôtel Dieu, and to receive his advice. Is the story really true, and are you Doctor Naudin?"

"The story is strictly true, and, my friend, I am Doctor Naudin."

"And you now leave the Hôtel Dieu to come and visit my sick wife?" asked Simon, with a pleasant look and a flattered manner.

"Does your wife not belong to my poor and sick?" asked the doctor. "Is she not a woman of the people, this dear French people, to whom I have devoted my services and my life? For a queen Doctor Naudin might not leave his hospital, but for a woman of the people he does it. And now, citizen, let me see your sick wife, for I did not come here to talk."

Without waiting for Simon's answer, the physician walked up to the bed, sat down on the chair in front of it, and began at once to investigate the condition of the woman, who reached him her feverish hand, and, with an almost inaudible voice, answered his professional questions.

The cobbler stood at the foot of the bed, and directed his little cunning eyes to the physician in amazement and admiration. Behind him, in the corner, sat the son of Marie Antoinette, humiliated, still, and motionless. Yet, in spite of the injunction of Jeanne Marie, he had turned around, and was looking toward the bed; but not to the knitter of the guillotine were his looks directed, but to this venerable old gentleman with his powdered peruke, his satin coat, silk stockings, breeches, shoe-buckles, gold embroidered waistcoat and lace ruffles. This costume reminded him of the past; the halls of Versailles came back to him, and he saw before him the shadowy figures of the cavaliers of that time, all clothed like the dear old gentleman who was sitting before the bed there.

"Why do you look at me in such a wondering way, Citizen Simon?" asked Naudin, who was now through with his examination.

"I really wonder—I really do wonder immensely," said Simon, "and that is saying much, for, in these times, when there are so many changes, a man can hardly wonder at any thing. Still I do wonder, Citizen Naudin, that you can venture to go around in this costume. That is the style of clothing worn by traitorous *ci-devants* and aristocrats. Anybody else who dare put it on would have only one more walk to take, that to the guillotine, and yet you venture to come here!"

"Venture?" repeated Naudin, with a shrug. "I venture nothing, citizen. I wear my clothes in conformity with a habit of years' standing: they fitted well under the monarchy, they fit just as well under the republic, and I am not going to be such a fool as to put by my soft and comfortable silk clothes, and put on your hateful, uncomfortable thick ones, and strut about in them. I am altogether too old to take up the new fashions, and altogether too well satisfied with my own suit to learn how to wear your cloth coats with swallow-tails, and your leather hose and top-boots. Defend me from crowding my old limbs into such stuffs!"

"Citizen doctor," cried Simon, with a laugh, "you are a jolly, good old fellow, and I like you well. I do not blame you for preferring your comfortable silk clothes to the new style that our revolutionary heroes have brought into mode, that nothing might remind us of the cursed, God-forsaken monarchy. I wonder merely that they allow it, and do not make you a head shorter!"

"But how would they go on with matters in the Hôtel Dieu? Without a head nothing could be done with the sick and the suffering, for without a head there is no thinking. Now, as I am the head of the hospital, and as they have no head to take my place, and as, in spite of my old-fashioned clothes, my sick are cured, and have confidence in me, the great revolutionary heroes wink at me, and let me do as I please, for they know that under the silk dress of an aristocrat beats the heart of a true democrat. But that is not the question before us now, citizen. We want to talk about the health of your wife here. She is sick, she has a fever, and it will be worse yet with her, unless we take prompt measures and provide a cooling drink for her."

"Do it, citizen doctor," said Simon; "make my Jeanne Marie well and bright again, or I shall go crazy here in this accursed house. Jeanne Marie is sick just with this, that she is not accustomed to be idle, and to sit still and fold her hands in her lap, and run around like a wild beast in its cage. But here in the Temple it is no better than in a cage; and I tell you, citizen, it is enough to make one crazy here, and it has made Jeanne sick to have no fresh air, no exercise and work."

"But why has she no exercise and no work? Why does she not go out into the street and take the air?"

"Because she cannot," cried Simon, passionately. "Because the cursed little viper there embitters our whole life and makes us prisoners to this miserable, wretched prisoner. Look at him there, the infernal little wolf! he is the one to blame that I cannot go into the street, cannot visit the clubs, the Convention, or any meeting, but must live here like a Trappist, or like an imprisoned criminal. He is the one to blame that my wife can no longer take her place at the guillotine, and knit and go on with her work there."

"Yes," cried Jeanne Marie, with a groan, raising her

THE DAUPHIN AND SIMON THE SHOEMAKER.

head painfully from the pillow, "he is to blame for it all, the shameless rascal. He has made me melancholy and sad; he has worried, and vexed, and changed me! Oh! oh! he is looking at me again, and his eyes burn into my heart!"

"Miserable viper," cried Simon, dashing toward the boy with clinched fists, "how dare you turn your hateful eyes toward her, after her expressly forbidding it? Wait, I will teach you to disobey, and give you a lesson that you will not forget."

His heavy hand fell on the back of the boy, and was raised again for a second stroke, when it was held as in an iron vice.

"You good-for-nothing, what are you doing?" cried a thundering voice, and two blazing eyes flashed on him from the reddened face of Doctor Naudin.

Simon's eyes fell before the angry look of the physician, then he broke out into a loud laugh.

"Citizen doctor, I say, what a jolly fellow you are," he said, merrily. "You did that just as if you were in a theatre, and you called out to me just as they call out to the murderers in a tragedy. What do you make such a halloo about when I chastise the wolf's cub a bit, as he has richly deserved?"

"It is true," said Naudin, "I was a little hasty. But that comes from the fact, citizen, that I not only held you to be a good republican, but a good man as well, and therefore it pained me to see you do a thing which becomes neither a republican nor a good man."

"Why, what have I done that is not proper?" asked Simon, in amazement.

"Look at him, the poor, beaten, swollen, stupefied boy," said Naudin, solemnly, pointing to Louis, who sat on his chair, weeping and trembling in all his limbs—"look at him, citizen, and then do not ask me again what you have done that is not proper."

"Well, but he deserves nothing better," cried Simon, with a sneer. "He is the son of the she-wolf, Madame Veto."

"He is a human being," said Doctor Naudin, solemnly, "and he is, besides, a helpless boy, whom the one, indivisible, and righteous republic deprived of his father and mother, and put under your care to be educated as if he were a son of your own. I ask you, citizen, would you have struck a son of your own as you just struck this boy?"

A loud, convulsive sob came from the bed on which Jeanne Marie lay, and entirely confused and disturbed Simon.

"No," he said, softly, "perhaps I should not have done it. But," continued he eagerly, and with a grim look, "a child of my own would not have tried and exasperated me as this youngster does. From morning till evening he vexes me, for he does nothing that I want him to. If I order him to sing with me, he is still and stupid, and when he ought to be still he makes a noise. Would you believe me, citizen, this son of the she-wolf leaves me no quiet for sleep. Lately, in the night, he kneeled down in the bed and began to pray with a loud voice, so as to wake both my wife and myself."

"From *that* night on I have been sick and miserable," moaned Jeanne Marie; "from that night I have not been able to sleep."

"You hear, citizen doctor, my wife was so terrified with that, that it made her sick, and now you shall have a proof of the disobedience of the little viper. Capet, come here."

The boy rose slowly from his chair, and stole along with drooping head to his master.

"Capet, we will sing," said Simon. "You shall show the doctor that you are a good republican, and that you have entirely forgotten that you are the son of the Austrian, the rascally Madame Veto. Come, we will sing the song about Madame Veto. Quick, strike in, or I will beat you into pulp. The song about Madame Veto, do you hear? Sing!"

A short pause ensued. Then the boy raised his swollen face and fixed his great blue eyes with a defiant, flaming expression upon the face of the cobbler.

"Citizen," he said, with clear, decided tones, "I shall not sing the song about Madame Veto, for I have not forgotten my dear mamma, and I can sing nothing bad about her, for I love my dear mamma so much, so much, and—"

The voice of the boy was drowned in his tears; he let his head fall upon his breast, ready to receive the threatened chastisement. But, before the fist of Simon, already raised, could fall upon the poor head of the little sufferer, a thrilling cry of pain resounded from the bed.

"Simon, come to me," gasped Jeanne Marie. "Help me draw the dagger out of my breast, I am dying—oh, I am dying!"

"What kind of a dagger?" cried Simon, rushing to the bed and taking the convulsed form of his wife in his arms.

"Hush!" whispered the doctor, who also had gone to the bed of the sick woman—"hush! she is speaking in her fever, and the dagger of which she talks she feels in her heart and conscience. You must spare her, citizen, if you do not want her to die. Every thing must be quiet around her, and you must be very careful not to agitate her nerves, lest she have an acute typhoid fever. I will send her some cooling medicine at once, and to-morrow morning I will come early to see how it fares with her. But, above every thing else, Simon, remember to have quiet, that your good wife may get well again."

"Who would have told me two weeks ago that Jeanne Marie had nerves?" growled Simon. "The first knitter of the guillotine, and now all at once nerves and tears, but I must be careful of her. For it would be too bad if she should die and leave me all alone with this tedious youngster. I could not hold out. I should run away. Go, Capet, get into your room, and do not get in my way again to-day, else I will strangle you before you can make a sound. Come, scud, clear, and do not let me see you again, if your life is worth any thing to you."

The child stole into his room again, sat down upon the floor, folded his little hands in one another, fixed his great blue eyes on the ceiling above, and held his breath to listen to every little sound, every footfall that came from the room above.

All at once he heard plainly the steps of some one walking up and down, and a pleased smile flitted across the face of the boy.

"That is certainly my dear mamma," he whispered to himself. "Yes, yes, it is my mamma queen, and she is taking her walk in the sitting-room, just as she has done since she has not been allowed to go out upon the platform. Oh, mamma, my dear mamma, I love you so much!"

And the child threw a kiss up to the ceiling, not knowing that she to whom he sent his greeting had long been resting in the silent grave, and that with the very hand which was throwing kisses to her, he had himself signed the paper which heaped upon his mother the most frightful calumnies.

Even Simon had not had the cruel courage to tell the boy of the death of his mother, and of the unconscious wrong that he, poor child, had done to her memory, and in his silent chamber his longing thoughts of her were his only consolation.

And so he sat there that day looking up to the ceiling, greeting his dear mamma with his thoughts, and seeing her in spirit greeting him again, nodding affectionately to him and drawing her dear little Louis Charles to her arms.

These were the sweet, transporting fancies which made the child close his eyes so as not to lose them. Immovably he sat there, until gradually thoughts and dreams flowed into each other, and not only his will, but sleep as well, kept his eyes closed. But the dreams remained, and were sweet and refreshing, and displayed to the sleeping child, so harshly treated in his waking hours, only scenes of love and tenderness. And it was not his mother alone who embraced him in his happy slumbers; no, there were his aunt and his sister as well, and at last even—oh how strange dreams are!—at last he even saw Simon's wife advancing toward him with kindly and tender mien. She stooped down to him, took him up in her arms, kissed his eyes, and begged him in a low, trembling voice to forgive her for being so cruel and bad. And while she was speaking the tears streamed from her eyes and flowed over his face. She kissed them away with her hot lips, and whispered, "Forgive me, poor, unhappy angel, and do not bring me to judgment. I will treat you well after this, I will rescue you from this hell, or I will die for you. Oh, how the bad man has beaten your dear angel face! But believe me, I have felt every blow in my own heart, and when he treated you so abusively I felt the pain of hell. Oh, forgive me, dear boy, forgive me!" and again the tears started from her eyes and flowed hot over his locks and forehead. All at once Jeanne Marie quivered convulsively, laid the boy gently down, and ran hastily away. A door was furiously opened now, and Simon's loud and angry voice was heard.

The tones awakened the little Louis. He opened his eyes and looked around. Yes, it had really all been only a dream—he had heard neither his mother nor Simon's wife, and yet it had been as natural as if it had all really transpired. He had felt arms tenderly embracing him and tears hot upon his forehead.

Entirely unconscious he raised his hand to his brow and drew it back affrighted, for his hair and his temples were wet, as if the tears of which he dreamed had really fallen there.

"What does this mean, Jeanne Marie?" asked Simon, angrily. "Why have you got out of bed while I was away, and what have you had to do in the room of the little viper?"

"If you leave me alone with him I have to watch him, sick as I am," moaned she. "I had to see whether he was still there, whether he had not run away, and gone to report to the Convention that we have left him alone and have no care for him."

"Oh, bah! he will not complain of us," laughed Simon; "but keep quiet, Jeanne Marie, I promise you that I will not leave you alone again with the wolf's cub. Besides, here is the medicine that the doctor has sent, and to-morrow he will come himself again to see how you get on. So keep up a good heart, Jeanne Marie, and all will come right again."

The next morning, Dr. Naudin came again to look after the sick woman. Simon had just gone up-stairs to announce something to the two princesses in the name of the Convention, and had ordered the little Capet to remain in the anteroom, and, if the doctor should come, to open the door to him.

Nobody else was in the anteroom when Dr. Naudin entered, and the door leading into the next room was closed, so that the sick person who was there could see and hear nothing of what took place.

"Sir," whispered the boy, softly and quickly, "you were yesterday so good to me, you protected me from blows, and I should like to thank you for it."

The doctor made no reply, but he looked at the boy with such an expression of sympathy that he felt emboldened to go on.

"My dear sir," continued the child, softly, and with a blush, "I have nothing with which to show my gratitude to you but these two pears that were given me for my supper last night. And just because I am so poor, you would do me a great pleasure if you would accept my two pears." *

He had raised his eyes to the doctor with a gentle, supplicatory expression, and taking the pears from the pocket of his worn, mended jacket, he gave them to the physician.

Then happened something which, had Simon entered the room just then, would probably have filled him with exasperation. It happened that the proud and celebrated Dr. Naudin, the director and first physician of the Hôtel Dieu, sank on his knee before this poor boy in the patched jacket, who had nothing to give but two pears, and that he was so overcome, either by inward pain or by reverence, that while taking the pears he could only whisper, with a faint voice: "I thank your majesty. I have never received a nobler or more precious gift than this fruit, which my unfortunate king gives me, and I swear to you that I will be your devoted and faithful servant."

It happened further that Dr. Naudin pressed to his lips the hand that reached him the precious gift, and that upon this hand two tears fell from the eyes of the physician, long accustomed to look upon human misery and pain, and which had not for years been suffused with moisture.

Just then, approaching steps being heard in the corridor, the doctor rose quickly, concealed the pears in his pocket, and entered the chamber of the sick woman at the same instant when Simon returned from his visit above-stairs.

The boy slipped, with the doctor, into the sick-room, and as no one paid any attention to him, he stole softly into his room, crouched down upon his straw bed, with fluttering heart, to think over all he had experienced or dreamed of that day.

"And how is it with our sick one to-day?" asked Doctor

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* The boy's own words.—See Beauchesne, vol. ii., p. 189.

Naudin, sitting down near the bed, and giving a friendly nod to Simon to do the same.

"It goes badly with me," moaned Mistress Simon. "My heart seems to be on fire, and I have no rest day or night. I believe that it is all over with me, and that I shall die, and that is the best thing for me, for then I shall be free again, and not have to endure the torments that I have had to undergo in this dreadful dungeon."

"What kind of pains are they?" asked the doctor. "Where do you suffer?"

"I will tell you, citizen doctor," cried Simon, impatiently. "Her pains are everywhere, in every corner of this lonely and cursed building; and if it goes on so long, we shall have to pack and move. The authorities have done us both a great honor, for they have had confidence enough in us to give the little Capet into our charge; but it is our misfortune to be so honored, and we shall both die of it. For, not to make a long story of it, we both cannot endure the air of the prison, the stillness and solitude, and it is a dreadful thing for us to see nothing else the whole day than the stupid face of this youngster, always looking at me so dreadfully with his great blue eyes, that it really affects one. We are neither of us used to such an idle, useless life, and it will be the death of us, citizen doctor. My wife, Jeanne Marie, whom you see lying there so pale and still, used to be the liveliest and most nimble woman about, and could do as much with her strong arms and brown hands as four other women. And then she was the bravest and most outrageous republican that ever was, when it came to battling for the people. We both helped to storm the Bastile, both went to Versailles that time, and afterward took the wolf's brood from the Tuileries and brought them to the Convention. Afterward Jeanne Marie was always the first on the platform near the guillotine; and when Samson and his assistants mounted the scaffold in the morning, and waited for the cars, the first thing they did was to look over to the tribune to see if Mistress Simon was there with her knitting, for it used to seem to them that the work of hewing off heads went more briskly on if Jeanne Marie was there and kept the account in her stocking. Samson himself told me this, and said to me that Jeanne Marie was the bravest of all the women, and that she never trembled, and that her eyes never turned away, however many heads fell into the basket. And she was there too when the Austrian—"

"Hush!" cried Jeanne Marie, rising up hastily in bed, and motioning to her husband to be silent. "Do not speak of that, lest the youngster hear it, and turn his dreadful eyes upon us. Do not speak of that fearful day, for it was then that my sickness began, and I believe that there was poison in the brandy that we drank that evening. Yes, yes, there was poison in it, and from that comes the fire that burns in my heart, and I shall die of it! Oh! I shall burn to death with it!"

She put her hands before her face and sank back upon the pillows, sobbing. Simon shook his head and heaved a deep sigh. "It is not that," murmured he; "it is not from that, doctor! The thing is, that Jeanne Marie has no work and no exercise, and that she is going to wreck, because we are compelled to live here as kings and aristocrats used to live, without labor and occupation, and without doing any more than to nurse our fancies. We shall all die of this, I tell you!"

"But if you know this, citizen, why do you not give up your situation? Why do you not petition the authorities to dismiss you from this service, and give you something else to do?"

"I have done that twice already," answered Simon, bringing his fist down upon the table near the bed so violently that the bottles of medicine standing there were jerked high into the air. "Twice already have I tried to be transferred to some other duty, and the answer has been sent back, that the country orders me to stand at my post, and that there is no one who could take my place."

"That is very honorable and flattering," remarked the physician.

"Yes, but very burdensome and disagreeable," answered Simon. "We are prisoners while holding these honorable and flattering posts. We can no more leave the Temple than Capet can, for, since his father died, and the crazy legitimists began to call him King Louis XVII., the chief magistrate and the Convention have been very anxious.

They are afraid of secret conspiracies, and consider it possible that the little prisoner may be taken away from here by intrigue. We have to watch him day and night, therefore, and are never allowed to leave the Temple, lest we should meet with other people, and lest the legitimists should make the attempt to get into our good graces. Would you believe, citizen doctor, that they did not even allow me to go to the grand festival which the city of Paris gave in honor of the taking of Toulan! While all the people were shouting, and having a good time, Jeanne Marie and I had to stay here in this good-for-nothing Temple, and see and hear nothing of the fine doings. And this drives the gall into my blood, and it will make us both sick, and it is past endurance!"

"I believe that you are right, citizen," said the physician, thoughtfully. "Yes, the whole trouble of your wife comes from the fact that she is here in the Temple, and if she must be shut up here always she will continue to suffer."

"Yes, to suffer always, to suffer dreadfully," groaned Jeanne Marie. Then, all at once, she raised herself up and turned with a commanding bearing to her husband.

"Simon," she said, "the doctor shall know all that I suffer. He shall examine my breast, and the place where I have the greatest pain; but in your presence I shall say nothing."

"Well, well, I will go," growled Simon. "But I think those are pretty manners!"

"They are the manners of a respectable and honorable woman," said the doctor, gravely—"a woman who does not show the pains and ailments of her body to any one excepting her physician. Go, go, Citizen Simon, and you will esteem your good wife none the less for not letting you hear what she has to say to her old physician."

"No, certainly not," answered Simon, "and that you may both see that I am not curious to hear what you have to say to one another, I will go with the youngster up to the platform and remain a whole hour with him."

"You will beat him again, and I shall hear him," said Jeanne Marie, weeping. "I hear every thing now that goes on in the Temple, and whenever you strike the youngster, I feel every blow in my brain, and that gives me pain enough to drive me to distraction."

"I promise you, Jeanne Marie, that I will not strike him, and will not trouble myself about him at all. He can play with his ball.—Halloa, Capet! Come! We are going up on the platform. Take your ball and any thing else you like, for you shall play to-day and have a good time."

The child stole out of his room with his ball, not looking particularly delighted, and the prospect of "playing" did not give wings to his steps, nor call a smile to his swollen face. He left the room noiselessly, and Simon slammed the doors violently behind him.

"And now we are alone," said Doctor Naudin, "and you can tell me about your sickness, and about every thing that troubles you."

"Ah, doctor, I do not dare to," she whispered. "I am overpowered by a dreadful fear, and I think you will betray me, and bring my husband and myself to the scaffold."

"I am no betrayer," answered the doctor, solemnly. "The physician is like a priest; he receives the secrets and disclosures of his patients, and lets not a word of them pass his lips. But, in order that you may take courage, I will first prove to you that I put confidence in you, by showing you that I understand you. I will tell you what the disease is that you are suffering from, and also its locality. Jeanne Marie Simon, you are enduring that with which no pains of the body can be compared. Your sickness has its seat in the conscience, and its name is remorse and despair."

Jeanne Marie uttered a heart-rending cry, and sprang like an exasperated tiger from her bed. "You lie!" she said, seizing the doctor's arm with both hands; "that is a foul, damnable calumny, that you have thought out merely to bring me under the axe. I have nothing to be sorry for, and my conscience fills me with no reproaches."

"And yet it is gnawing into you with iron teeth, which have been heated blood-red in the fires of hell," said the doctor, with a compassionate look at the pale, quivering face of the woman. "Do not raise any quarrel, but quietly listen to me. We have an hour's time to talk together, and we want to use it. But let us speak softly, softly, together; for what we have to say to each other the deaf walls themselves ought not to hear."

Simon had not returned from the platform with the boy, when Doctor Naudin ended his long and earnest conversation, and prepared to leave his patient, who was now quietly lying in her bed.

"You know every thing now that you have to do," he said, extending his hand to her. "You can reckon on me as I reckon on you, and we will both go bravely and cheerfully on. It is a noble work that we have undertaken, and if it succeeds your heart will be light again, and God will forgive you your sins, for two martyrs will stand and plead in your behalf at the throne of God! Now, do every thing exactly as I have told you, and speak with your husband to-night, but not sooner, that you may be safe, and for fear that in his first panic his face would betray him."

"I shall do every thing just as you wish," said Jeanne Marie, who had suddenly become humble and bashful, apparently entirely forgetful of the republican "thou." "It seems to me, now that I have disburdened my heart to you, that I have become well and strong again, and certainly I shall owe it to you if I do live and get my health once more. But shall you come again to-morrow, doctor?"

"No," he replied, "I will send a man to-morrow who understands better than I do how to continue this matter, and to whom you can give unconditional confidence. He will announce himself to you as my assistant, and you can talk over at length every thing that we have been speaking of. Hush! I hear Simon coming! Farewell!"

He nodded to Jeanne Marie, and hastily left the room. Outside, in the corridor, he met Simon and his silent young ward.

"Well, citizen doctor," asked Simon, "how is it with our sick one? She has intrusted all her secrets to you, and they must have made a long story, for you have been a whole hour together. It is fortunate that you are an old man, or else I should have been jealous of your long *tête-à-tête* with my wife."

"Then you would be a great fool, and I have always held you to be a prudent and good man. But, as concerns your wife, I must tell you something very serious, and I beg you, Citizen Simon, to mark my words well. I tell you this: unless your wife Jeanne Marie is out of this Temple in less than a week, and enjoys her freedom, she will either lose her senses or take her life. I will say to you this, besides: if Citizen Simon does not, as soon as possible, leave this cursed place and give up his hateful business, it will be the same with him as with his wife. He will not become insane, but he will lapse into melancholy, and if he does not take his own life consumption will take it for him, the result of his idle, listless life, the many vexations here, and the wretched atmosphere of the Temple."

"Consumption!" cried Simon, horrified. "Do you suppose I am exposed to that?"

"You have it already," said the doctor, solemnly. "Those red spots on your cheeks, and the pain which you have so often in the breast, announce its approach. I tell you that if you do not take measures to leave the Temple in a week, in three months you will be a dead man, without giving the guillotine a chance at you. Good-by! Consider well what I say, citizen, and then do as you like!"

"He is right," muttered Simon, as he looked after the doctor with a horrified look, as Naudin descended the staircase; "yes, I see, he is right. If I have to stay here any longer, I shall die. The vexations and the loneliness, and—something still more dreadful, frightful, that I can tell no one of—have made me sick, and the stitch in my side will grow worse and worse every day, and—I must and will get away from here," he said aloud, and with a decided air. "I will not die yet, neither shall Jeanne Marie. To-morrow I will hand in my resignation, and then be away!"

While Simon was walking slowly and thoughtfully toward his wife, Doctor Naudin left the dark building, went with a light heart out into the street, and returned with a quick step to the Hôtel Dieu. The porter who opened the door for him, reported to him that during his absence the same old gentleman who had come the day before to consult him, had returned and was waiting for him in the anteroom.

Doctor Naudin nodded, and then walked quickly toward his own apartments. Before the door he found his servant.

"Old Doctor Saunier is here again," he said, taking off his master's cloak. "He insisted on waiting for you. He said that he must consult you about a patient, and would not cease begging till you should consent to accompany him to the sick person's house. For, if a case seemed desperate, the great Naudin might still save it."

"You are an ass for letting him talk such nonsense, and for believing it yourself, Citizen Joly," cried Naudin with a laugh, and then entering the anteroom.

An old gentleman, clad in the same old-fashioned costume with Doctor Naudin, came forward. Citizen Joly, as he closed the door somewhat slowly, heard him say: "Thank God that you have come at last, citizen! I have waited for you impatiently, and now I conjure you to accompany me as quickly as possible to my patient."

Naudin, opening the door of his study, said in reply, "Come in, Citizen Saunier, and tell me first how it is with your sick one."

Nothing more could Joly, Naudin's servant, understand, for the two doctors had gone into the study, and the door was closed behind them. After a short time, however, it was opened. Naudin ordered the valet to order a fiacre at once, and a few minutes later Director Naudin rode away at the side of Doctor Saunier.

At a house in the Rue Montmartre the carriage stopped, and the two physicians entered. The porter, opening the little, dusty window of his lodge, nodded confidentially to Saunier.

"That is probably the celebrated Doctor Naudin of the Hôtel Dieu, whom you have with you?" he asked.

"Yes, it is he," answered Saunier, "and if anybody can help our patient, it is he. Citizen Crage is probably at home?"

"Certainly he is at home, for you know he never leaves his sick boy. You will find him above. You know the way, citizen doctor!"

The two physicians passed on, ascended the staircase, and entered the suit of rooms whose door was only partially closed—left ajar, as it seemed, for them. Nobody came to meet them, but they carefully closed the door behind them, drew the bolt, and then walked silently and quickly across the anteroom to the opposite door.

Doctor Saunier knocked softly three times with a slight interval between, and cried three times with a loud voice, "The two physicians are come to see the patient."

A bolt was withdrawn on the inside, the door opened, and a tall man's figure appeared and motioned to the gentlemen to come in.

"Are we alone?" whispered Doctor Saunier, as they entered the inner room.

"Yes, entirely alone," answered the other. "There in the chamber lies my poor sick boy, and you know well that he can betray no one, and that he knows nothing of what is going on around him."

"Yes, unfortunately, I know that," answered Doctor Saunier sadly. "I promised you that I would bring you the most celebrated and skilful physician in Paris, and you see I keep my word, for I have brought you Doctor Naudin, the director of the Hôtel Dieu and—the friend and devoted servant of the royal family, to whom we have both sworn allegiance until death. Doctor Naudin, I have not given you the name of the gentleman to whom I was taking you. It is a secret which only the possessor is able to divulge to you."

"I divulge it," said the other, smiling, "Doctor Naudin, I am the Marquis Jarjayes."

"Jarjayes, who made the plan for the escape of the royal family in the Temple?" asked Naudin eagerly. "Marquis Jarjayes, who lost his property in the service of the queen, risked his life in her deliverance, and perhaps escaped the guillotine merely by emigrating and putting himself beyond the reach of Robespierre. Are you that loyal, courageous Marquis de Jarjayes?"

"I am Jarjayes, and I thank you for the praises you have given me, but I cannot accept them in the presence of him who merits them all much more than I do, and who is more worthy of praise than any one else. No, I can receive no commendation in the presence of Toulan, the most loyal, the bravest, the most prudent of us all; for Toulan is the soul of every thing, and our martyr queen confessed it in giving him the highest of all titles of honor, in calling him Fidèle, a title which will remain for centuries."

"Yes, you are right," said Dr. Naudin, laying his hand on the shoulder of Dr. Saunier. "He is the noblest, most loyal, and bravest of us all. On that account, when he came to me a few days ago and showed me the golden salt's-bottle of the queen in confirmation of his statement that he was Toulan, I was ready to do every thing that he might desire of me and to enter into all his plans, for Toulan's magnanimity and fidelity are contagious, and excite every one to emulate him."

"I beg you, gentlemen," said Toulan softly, "do not praise me nor think that to be heroism which is merely natural. I have devoted to Queen Marie Antoinette my life, my thought, my heart. I swore upon her hand that so long as I lived I would be true to her and her family, and to keep my vow is simple enough. Queen Marie Antoinette is no more. I was not able to save her, but perhaps she looks down from the heavenly heights upon us, and is satisfied with us, if she sees that we are now trying to do for her son what, unfortunately, we were not able to accomplish for her. This is my hope, and this spurs me on to attempt every thing, in order to bring about the last wish of my queen—the freeing of her son. God in His grace has willed that I should not be alone in this effort, and that I should have the coöperation of noble men. He visibly blesses our plans, for is it not a manifest sign of His blessing that, exactly in those days when we are trying to find a means of approaching the unhappy, imprisoned son of the queen, accident affords us this means? Exactly at the hour when I went to Dr. Naudin and disclosed myself to him, the porter of the Temple came and desired in behalf of Simon's wife that Dr. Naudin should go to the Temple."

"Yes, indeed, it was a wonderful occurrence," said Naudin, thoughtfully. "I am not over-blessed with sensibility, but when I saw the son of the queen in his sorrow and humiliation, I sank on my knee before the poor little king, and in my heart I swore that Toulan should find in me a faithful coadjutor in his plan, and that I would do every thing to set him free."

"And so have I too sworn," cried Jarjayes, with enthusiasm. "The queen is dead, but our fidelity to her lives and shall renew itself to her son, King Louis XVII. I know well that the police are watching me, that they know who is secreting himself here under the name of Citizen Orage, that they follow every one of my steps and perhaps suffer me to be free only for the purpose of seeing with whom I have relations, in order to arrest and destroy me at one fell swoop, with all my friends at the same time. But we must use the time. I have come here with the firm determination of delivering the unhappy young king from the hands of his tormentors, and I will now confess every thing to you, my friends. I have gained for our undertaking the assistance and protection of a rich and noble patron, a true servant of the deceased king. The Prince de Condé, with whom I have lived in Vendée for the past few months, has furnished me with ample means, and is prepared to support us to any extent in our undertaking. If we succeed in saving the young king, the latter will find in Vendée a safe asylum with the prince, and will live there securely, surrounded by his faithful subjects. The immense difficulty, or, as I should have said a few days ago, the impossibility, is the release of the young prince from the Temple. But now that I have succeeded in discovering Toulan and uniting myself with him, I no longer say it is impossible, but only it is difficult."

"And," cried Toulan, "since I am sure of the assistance of the noble Doctor Naudin, I say, we will free him, the son of our Queen Marie Antoinette, the young King Louis XVII. The plan is entirely ready in my head, and in order to make its execution possible, I went a few days ago to see Doctor Naudin at the Hôtel Dieu, in order to beg him to visit the sick boy that the marquis has here, and just at that moment Simon's messenger came to the Temple. Doctor Naudin is now here, and first of all it is necessary that he give us his last, decisive judgment on the patient. So take us to him, marquis, for upon Naudin's decision depends the fate of the young King of France."

The marquis nodded silently, and conducted the gentlemen into the next room. There, carefully propped up by mattresses and pillows, lay a child of perhaps ten years—a poor, unfortunate boy, with pale, sunken cheeks, fixed blue eyes, short fair hair, and a stupid, idiotic expression on his features. As the three gentlemen came to him he fixed his eyes upon them in a cold, indifferent way, and not a quiver in his face disclosed any interest in them. Motionless and pale as death the boy lay upon his bed, and only the breath that came hot and in gasps from his breast disclosed that there was still life in this poor shattered frame.

Doctor Naudin stooped down to the boy and looked at him a long time with the utmost attention.

"This boy is perfectly deaf!" he then said, raising himself up and looking at the marquis inquiringly.

"Yes, doctor, your sharp eye has correctly discerned it; he is perfectly deaf."

"Is it your son?"

"No, doctor, he is the son of my sister, the Baroness of Tardif, who was guillotined together with her husband. I undertook the care of this unfortunate child, and at my removal from Paris gave him to some faithful servants of my family to be cared for. On my return I learned that the good people had both been guillotined, and find the poor boy, who before had been at least sound in body, utterly neglected, and living on the sympathy of the people who had taken him on the death of his foster-parents. I brought the child at once to this house, which I had hired for myself under the name of Citizen Orage, and Toulan undertook to procure the help of a physician. It has now come in the person of the celebrated Doctor Naudin, and I beg you to have pity on the poor unfortunate child, and to receive him into the Hôtel Dieu."

"Let me first examine the child, in order to tell you what is the nature of his disorder."

And Doctor Naudin stooped down again to the boy, examined his eyes, his chest, his whole form, listened to his breathing, the action of his heart, and felt his pulse. The patient was entirely apathetic during all this, now and then merely whining and groaning, when a movement of the doctor's hand caused him pain.

After the careful investigation had been ended, the doctor called the two gentlemen who had withdrawn to the window to the bed again.

"Marquis," said he, "this unfortunate child will never recover, and the least painful thing that could happen to him would be a speedy release from his miserable lot. Yet I do not believe that this will occur, but consider it possible that the boy will protract his unfortunate life a full year after his mind has entirely passed away, and nothing is left of him but his body. The boy, if you can regard such a poor creature as a human being, is suffering from an incurable form of scrofula, which will by and by consume his limbs, and convert him into an idiot; he is now deaf; he will be a mere stupid beast. If it were permitted to substitute the hand of science in place of the hand of God, I should say we ought to kill this poor creature that is no man and no beast, and has nothing more to expect of life than pain and torture, having no more consciousness of any thing than the dog has when he does not get a bone with which to quiet his hunger."

"Poor, unhappy creature!" sighed the marquis. "Now, I thank God that He released my sister from the pain of seeing her dear child in this condition.

"Doctor Naudin," said Toulan, solemnly, "is it your fixed conviction that this sick person will never recover?"

"My firm and undoubted conviction, which every physician who should see him would share with me."

"Are you of the opinion that this child has nothing in life to lose, and that death would be a gain to it?"

"Yes; that is my belief. Death would be a release for the poor creature, for life is only a burden to it as well as to others."

"Then," cried Toulan, solemnly, "I will give this poor sick child a higher and a fairer mission. I will make its life an advantage to others, and its death a hallowed sacrifice. Marquis of Jarjayes, in the name of King Louis XVI., in the name of the exalted martyr to whom we have all sworn fidelity unto death, Queen Marie Antoinette, I demand and desire of you that you would intrust to me this unhappy creature, and give his life into my hands. In the name of Marie Antoinette, I demand of the Marquis of Jarjayes that he deliver to me the son of his sister, that he do what every one of us is joyfully prepared to do if our holy cause demands it, that this boy may give his life for his king, the imprisoned Louis XVII."

While Toulan was speaking with his earnest, solemn voice, Jarjayes knelt before the bed of the poor sobbing child, and, hiding his face in his hands, he prayed softly.

Then, after a long pause, he rose and laid his hand on the feverish brow of the boy. "You have addressed me," he said, "in the name of Queen Marie Antoinette. You demand of me as the guardian of this poor creature that I give him to you, that he may give his life for his king. The sons and daughters of my house have always been ready and glad to devote their possessions, their happiness, their lives, to the service of their kings, and I speak simply in the spirit of my sister—who ascended the scaffold to seal her fidelity to the royal family with her death—I speak in the spirit of all my ancestors when I say, here is the last offspring of the Baroness of Tardif, here is the son of my sister; take him and let him live or die for his king, Louis XVII., the prisoner at the Temple."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE CONSULTATION.

DURING the night which followed the second visit of Doctor Naudin, Jeanne Marie Simon had a long and earnest conversation with her husband. The first words which the wife uttered, spoken in a whisper though they were, excited the cobbler so much that he threatened her with his clinched fist. She looked him calmly in the face, however, and said to him softly, "And so you mean to stay perpetually in this hateful prison? You want to remain shut up here like a criminal, and get no more satisfaction out of life than what comes from tormenting this poor, half-witted boy to death?"

Simon let his hand fall, and said, "If there were a means of escaping from this infernal prison, it would certainly be most welcome to me, for I am heartily tired of being a prisoner here, after having prayed for freedom so long, and worked for it so much. So, if there is a means—"

"There is such a means," interrupted his wife. "Listen to me!"

And Simon did listen, and the moving and eloquent words of his wife at length found a willing ear. Simon's face gradually lightened up, and it seemed to him that he was now able to release his wife from an oppressive, burdensome load.

"If it succeeds," he muttered—"if it succeeds, I shall be free from the mountainous weight which presses upon me day and night and shall become a healthy man again."

"And if it does not succeed," whispered Jeanne Marie, "the worst that can happen to us is what has happened to thousands before us. We shall merely feed the machine, and our heads will tumble into the basket, with this difference, that I shall not be able to make any mark in my stocking. I would rather die all at once on the guillotine and have it over, than be dying here day after day, and hour after hour, having nothing to expect from life but pain and ennui."

"And I, too," said Simon, decidedly. "Rather die, than go on leading such a dog's life. Let your doctor come to me to-morrow morning. I will talk with him!"

Early the next day the doctor came in his long, black cloak, and with his peruke, to visit the sick Mistress Simon. The guards at the gate leading to the outer court quietly let him pass in, and did not notice that another face appeared in the peruke from that which had been seen the day before. The two official guards above, who had just completed their duties in the upper story, and met the doctor on the tower stairs, did not take any offence at his figure. The director of the Hôtel Dieu was not personally known to them, and they were familiar with but little about him, excepting that he took the liberty of going about in his old-fashioned cloak, without giving offence to the authorities, and that he had permission from those authorities to come to the Temple for the purpose of visiting the wife of Simon.

"You will find two patients to-day up there, said one of the officials as he passed by. "We empower you, doctor, to take the second one, little Capet, under your charge. The boy appears to be really sick, or else he is obstinate and mulish. He answers no questions, and he has taken no nourishment, Simon tells us, since yesterday noon. Examine into the case, doctor, and then tell us what your opinion is. We will wait for you down in the council-room. So make as much haste as possible."

They passed on, and the doctor did really make haste to ascend the staircase. At the open door which led to the apartment of the little Capet and his "guardian," he found Simon.

"Did you hear, citizen?" asked the doctor. "The officials are waiting for me below."

"Yes, I heard, doctor," whispered Simon. "We have not much time. Come!"

He motioned to the physician to pass along the corridor and to enter the room, while he bolted and locked the outer door. As the doctor entered, Mistress Simon lay upon her bed and looked at the new-comer with curious, glowing eyes.

"Who are you?" she asked, rising quickly from her bed. "You are not Doctor Naudin whom I expected, and I do not know you!"

Meantime the doctor walked in silence to her bed, and stooped over Jeanne Marie, who sank back upon the pillow.

"I am the one who is to help you escape from the Temple," he whispered. "Doctor Naudin has sent me, to work in union with him and you in effecting your release and that of the unfortunate Capet."

"Husband," cried Jeanne Marie to the cobbler, who was just coming in, "this is the man who is going to deliver us from this hell!"

"That is to say," said the doctor, with a firm, penetrating voice, "I will free you if you will help me free the dauphin."

"Speak softly, for God's sake, speak softly," said Simon anxiously. "If any one should hear you, we are all lost! We will do every thing that you demand of us, provided that we can in that way escape from this miserable, good-for-nothing place. The air here is like poison, and to have to stay here is like being buried alive."

"And then the dreams, the frightful dreams," muttered Jeanne Marie, with a shudder. "I cannot sleep any more in this dreadful prison, for that pale, fearful woman, with great, fixed eyes, goes walking about through the Temple every night, and listens at the doors to see whether her children are alive yet, and whether we are not killing them. Lately, she has not only listened at the doors, but she has come into my room, and passed my bed, and gone into the chamber of little Capet. Simon was asleep, and did not see her. I sprang up, however, and stole softly to the door; for I thought somebody had crept in here in disguise, possibly Citizen Toulan, who had already twice made the attempt to release the Austrian and her children, and whom I then denounced at headquarters. There I saw—although it was entirely dark in the hall—there I saw little Capet lying asleep on his mattress, his hands folded over his breast, and with an expression of countenance more happy, altogether more happy, than it ever is when he is awake. Near the mattress kneeled the figure in white, and it seemed as if a radiance streamed out from it that filled the whole room. Its face was pale and white, just like a lily, and it seemed as if the fragrance of a lily was in the apartment. Her two arms were raised, as if she would utter a benediction over her sleeping boy; around her half-opened lips played a sweet smile, and her great eyes, which had the aspect of stars, looked up toward heaven. But while I was there in a maze, and watched the figure in a transport of delight, there occurred, all at once, something wonderful, something dreadful. The figure rose from its knees, dropped its arms, turned itself around, and advanced straight toward me. The eyes, which had been turned so purely heavenward before, were directed to me, with a look which pierced my breast like the thrust of a knife. I recognized that look—that sad, reproachful glance. It was the same that Marie Antoinette gave me, when she stood on the scaffold. I was sitting in the front row of the knitters, and I was just going to make the double stitch for her in my stocking, when that look met me; those great, sad eyes were turned toward me, and I felt that she had recognized me, and her eyes bored into my breast, and followed me even after the axe had taken off her head. The eyes did not fall into the basket, they were not buried, but they remain in my breast; they have been piercing me ever since, and burning me like glowing coals. But that night I saw them again, as in life—those dreadful eyes; and as the figure advanced toward me, it raised its hand and threatened me, and its eyes spoke to me, and it seemed as if a curse of God were going through my brain, for those eyes said to me—'Murder!'—spoke it so loudly, so horribly, that it appeared as if my head would burst, and I could not cry, and could not move, and had to look at it, till, at last, I became unconscious."

"There, see there, doctor," cried Simon, in alarm, as his wife fell back upon the pillow with a loud cry, and quivered in all her limbs; "now she has convulsions again, and then she will be, for a day or two, out of her mind, and will talk strangely about the pale woman with dreadful eyes; and when she goes on so, she makes even me sad, and anxious, and timid, and I grow afraid of the white ghost that she says is always with us. Ah! doctor, help us! See, now, how the poor woman suffers and twists!"

The doctor drew a bottle from his breast-pocket, and rubbed a few drops upon the temples of the sick woman.

"Those are probably the famous soothing-drops of Doctor Naudin?" asked Simon, in astonishment, when he saw how quiet his wife became, and that her spasms and groans ceased.

"Yes," answered the doctor, "and the eminent physician sends them as a present to your wife. They are very costly, and rich people have to pay a louis-d'or for every drop. But Doctor Naudin gives them to you, for he wishes Jeanne Marie long to enjoy good health. How is it with you now?"

"I feel well, completely well," she said, as the doctor rubbed some drops a second time on her temple. "I feel easier than I have felt for a long time."

"Give me your hand," said the doctor. "Rise up, for you are well. Let us go into the chamber of the poor boy, for I have to speak with you there."

He walked toward the chamber-door, leading Jeanne Marie by the hand, while Simon followed them. Softly and silently they entered the dark room, and went to the mattress on which the child lay.

The boy stared at them with great, wide-opened eyes, but they were without expression and life, and only the breath, as it came slowly and heavily from the half-opened lips, showed that there was vitality still in this poor, little, shrunken form.

The doctor kneeled down beside the bed, and, bending over it, pressed a long, fervent kiss on the delicate, hot hand of the child. But Charles Louis remained motionless; he merely slowly dropped his lids and closed his eyes.

"You see, doctor, he neither hears nor sees," said Simon, in a low, growling voice. "He cares for nothing, and does not know any thing about what is going on around him. It is a week since he spoke a word."

"Not since the day when you wanted to compel the child to sing the song that makes sport of his mother."

"He did not sing it?" asked the doctor, with a tremulous voice.

"He is a mulish little toad," cried Simon, angrily. "I begged him at first, then I threatened, and when prayers and threats were of no use I punished him, as a naughty boy deserves when he will not do what his foster-father bids him do. But even blows did not bring him to it; the obstinate youngster would not sing the merry song with me, and since then he has not spoken a word.* He seems as if he had grown deaf and dumb as a punishment for not obeying his good foster-father."

"He is neither deaf nor dumb," said the doctor, solemnly. "He is simply a good son, who would not sing the song which made sport of his noble and unfortunate mother. See whether I am not right; see these tears which run from his closed eyes. He has heard us, he has understood us, and he answers us with his tears! Oh, sire," he continued passionately, "by the sacred remembrance of your father and your mother, I swear devotion to you until death; I swear that I have come to set you free, to die for you. Look up, my king and my darling one! I intrust to you and to both these witnesses my whole secret; I let the mask fall to show myself to you in my true form, that you may confide in me, and know that the most devoted of your servants is kneeling before you, and that he dedicates his life to you. Open your eyes, Louis of France, and see whether you know me!"

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* Historical.—See Beauchesne's "Histoire de Louis XVII.," vol. ii.

He sprang up, threw off the great peruke, and the long black cloak, and stood before them in the uniform of an official guard.

"Thunder and guns!" cried Simon, with a loud laugh. "it is—"

"Hush!" interrupted the other—"hush! He alone shall declare who I am! Oh, look at me, my king; convince these unbelieving ones here that your mind is clear and strong, and that you are conscious of what is going on around you. Look at me, and if you know me, speak my name!"

And with folded hands, in unspeakable emotion, he leaned over the bed of the child, that still lay with closed eyes.

"I knew that he could hear nothing, and that he was deaf," growled Simon, while his wife folded her trembling hands, and with tearful eyes whispered a prayer.

A deep silence ensued, and with anxious expectation each looked at the boy. At length he slowly raised the heavy, reddened eyelids, and looked with a timid, anxious glance around himself. Then his gaze fixed itself upon the eloquent, speaking face of the man whose tears were falling like warm dew-drops upon his pale, sunken features.

A quiver passed over the coutenance of the boy, a beam of joy lighted up his eyes, and something like a smile played around his trembling lips.

"Do you know me? Do you know my name?"

The child raised his hand in salutation, and said, in a clear, distinct voice: "Toulan! Fidèle!"

Toulan fell on his knees again and covered the little thin hand of the boy with his tears and his kisses.

"Yes, Fidèle," he sobbed. "That is the title of honor which your royal mother gave me—that is the name that she wrote on the bit of paper which she put into the gold smelling-bottle that she gave me. That little bottle, which a queen once carried, is my most precious possession. and yet I would part with that if I could save the life of her son, happy if I could but retain the hallowed paper on which the queen's hand wrote the word 'Fidèle.' Yes.

you poor, pitiable son of kings, I am Fidèle, I am Toulan, at whom you have so often laughed when he played with you in your prison."

A flash like the sunlight passed over the face of the child, and a smile illumined his features.

"She used to laugh, too," he whispered—"she, too, my mamma queen."

"Yes, she too laughed at our jests," said Toulan, with a voice choked with tears; "and, believe me, she looks down from heaven upon us and smiles her blessing, for she knows that Toulan has come to free her dear son, and to deliver him from the executioner's hands. Tell me now, my king and my dearly-loved lord, will you trust me, will you give to your most devoted servant and subject the privilege of releasing you? Do you consent to accept freedom at the hands of your Fidèle?"

The child threw a timid, anxious glance at Simon and his wife, and then, with a shudder, turned his head to one side.

"You make no answer, sire," said Toulan, imploringly. "Oh! speak, my king, may I set you free?"

The boy spoke a few words in reply, but so softly that Toulan could not understand him. He stooped down nearer to him, and put his ear close to the lips of the child. He then could hear the words, inaudible to all but him, "He will disclose you; take care, Toulan. But do not say any thing, else he will beat me to death!"

Toulan made no reply; he only impressed a long, tender kiss upon the trembling hand of the child.

"Did he speak?" asked Simon. "Did you understand, citizen, what he said?"

"Yes, I understood him," answered Toulan. "He consents; he allows me to make every attempt to free him, and is prepared to do every thing that we ask of him. And now I ask you too, are you prepared to help me release the prince?"

"You know already, Toulan," said Simon, quickly, "that we are prepared for every thing, provided that our conditions are fulfilled. Give me a tolerable position outside of the Temple; give me a good bit of money, so that I may live free from care, and if the new place should not suit me, that I could go into the country, and not have to work at all; give my Jeanne Marie her health and cheerfulness again, and I will help you set young Capet free."

"Through my assistance, and that of Doctor Naudin, you shall have a good place outside of the Temple," answered Toulan, eagerly. "Besides this, at the moment when you deliver the prince into my hands, outside of this prison, I will pay you in ready money the sum of twenty thousand francs; and as for the third condition, that about restoring her health to Jeanne Marie, I am sure that I can fulfil this condition too. Do you not know, Simon, what your wife is suffering from? Do you not know what her sickness is?"

"No, truly not. I am no doctor. How should I know what her sickness is?"

"Then I will tell you, Citizen Simon. Your wife is suffering from the worst of all complaints, a bad conscience! Yes, it is a bad conscience that robs her of her sleep and rest; it is that which makes her see the white, pale form of the martyred queen in the night, and read the word 'murderer' in her eyes."

"He is right!—oh, he is right!" groaned Jeanne Marie, falling on her knees. "I am to blame for her death, for I denounced Toulan to the authorities just when he was on the point of saving her. I tortured her!—oh, cruelly tortured her, and I laughed when she ascended the scaffold, and I laughed too, even when she gave me that dreadful look. But I have bitterly regretted it since, and now she gnaws at me like a scorpion. I wanted to drive her away from me at first, and therefore I was cruel to her son, for I wanted to put an end to the fearful remorse that was tormenting me. But it grew even more powerful within me. The more I beat the boy, the more his tears moved me, and often I thought I should die when I heard him cry and moan. Yes, yes, it is a bad conscience that has made me sick and miserable! But I will do right after this. I repent—oh, I repent! Here I lay my hand on the heart of this child and swear to his murdered mother I will do right again! I swear that I will free her son! I swear by all that is sacred in heaven and on earth that I will die myself, unless we succeed in freeing this child! I swear to you, Marie Antoinette, that I will free him. But will you forgive me even then? Will you have rest in your poor grave, and not come to my bedside and condemn me and accuse me with your sad, dreadful eyes?"

"Free her son, Jeanne Marie," said Toulan, solemnly, "and his mother will forgive you, and her hallowed shade will no longer disturb your sleep, for you will then have restored to her the peace of the grave! But you, Citizen Simon, will you too not swear that you will faithfully assist in releasing the royal prince? Do you not know that conscience is awake in your heart too, and compels you to have compassion on the poor boy?"

"I know it, yes, I know it," muttered Simon, confused. "His gentle eyes and his sad bearing have made me as weak and as soft as an old woman. It is high time that I should be rid of the youngster, else it will be with me just as it is with my wife, and I shall have convulsions and see ghosts with daggers in their eyes. And so, in order to remain a strong man and have a good conscience and a brave heart, I must be rid of the boy, and must know that I have done him some service, and have been his deliverer. And so I swear by the sacred republic, and by our hallowed freedom, that I will help you and do all that in me lies to release little Capet and get him away from here. I hope you will be satisfied with my oath, Toulan, for there is nothing for me more sacred than the republic and freedom."

"I am satisfied, Simon, and I trust you. And now let us talk it all over and consider it, my dear allies. The whole plan of the escape is formed in my head, all the preparations are made, and if you will faithfully follow all that I bid you, in one week's time you will be free and happy."

"So soon as a week!" cried Simon, delightedly.

"Yes, in a week, for it happens fortunately that one of the officials of the Public Safety service is dangerously sick and has been carried to the Hôtel Dieu. Doctor Naudin says that he can live but three days longer, and then the post will be vacant. We must be active, therefore, and take measures for you to gain the place. Now listen to me, and mark my words."

They had a long conversation by the bedside of the little prince, and they saw that he perfectly understood the whole plan which Toulan unfolded in eloquent words, for his looks took on a great deal of expression; he fixed his eyes constantly on Toulan, and a smile played about his lips.

Simon and Simon's wife were also perfectly satisfied with Toulan's communication, and repeated their readiness to do every thing to further the release of the prince, if they in return could only be removed from the Temple.

"I will at once take the steps necessary to the success of my plan," said Toulan, taking his leave with a friendly nod, and kissing the boy's hand respectfully.

"Fidèle," whispered Louis, "Fidèle, do you believe that I shall be saved?"

"I am sure of it, my dear prince. The grace of God and the blessing of your exalted parents will be our helpers in bringing this good work to a completion. Farewell, and preserve as long as you remain here the same mood that I found you in. Show little interest in what goes on, and appear numb and stupid. I shall not come again, for after this I must work for you outside of the prison. But Doctor Naudin will come every day to see you, and on the day of your flight I shall be by your side. Till then, God bless you, my dear prince!"

Toulan left the prison of the little Capet and repaired at once to the Hôtel Dieu, where he had a long conversation with Doctor Naudin. At the end of it, the director of the hospital entered his carriage and drove to the city hall, in whose largest chamber a committee of the Public Safety officials were holding a public meeting. With earnest and urgent words the revered and universally valued physician gave the report about the visits which he had made at the Temple for some days at the command of the authorities, and about the condition of affairs there. Pétion the elder, the presiding officer of the committee, listened to the report with a grave repose, and the picture of the low health of the "little Capet," while he paid the most marked attention to that part of the report which concerned the Simons.

'Citizen Simon has deserved much of the country, and he is one of the most faithful supporters of the one and indivisible republic," said Pétion, when Doctor Naudin ended his report. "The republic must, like a grateful mother, show gratitude to her loyal sons, and care for them tenderly. So tell us, Citizen Naudin, what must be done in order to restore health to Citizen Simon and his wife."

"They are both sick from the same cause, and, therefore, they both require the same remedy. That remedy is, a change of air and a change of location. Let Simon have another post, where he shall be allowed to exercise freely out of doors, and where he shall not be compelled to breathe only the confined air of a cell; and let his wife not be forced to listen to the whining and the groaning of the little sick Capet. In one word, give to them both liberty to move around, and the free air, and they will, without any doubt, and within a short time, regain their health."

"It is true," said Pétion, "the poor people lead a sad life in the Temple, and are compelled to breathe the air that the last scions of tyranny have contaminated with their poisonous breaths. We owe it to them to release them from this bad atmosphere, in consideration of their faithful and zealous service to the country. Citizen Simon has always taken pains to repair the great neglect in Capet's education, and to make the worthless boy prove some day a worthy son of the republic."

"But even if Simon should remain in the Temple, he would not be able to go on much longer with the education of the boy," said the hospital director, wth a shrug.

"What do you mean by that, citizen doctor?" asked Pétion, with a pleasant lighting up of his eyes.

"I mean that the boy has not a long time to live, for he is suffering at once from consumption and softening of the brain, and the latter disease will soon reduce him to an idiot, and render him incapable of receiving instruction."

"You are convinced that the son of the tyrants will not recover?" asked Pétion, with a strained, eager glance.

"My careful examination of his case has convinced me that he has but a short time to live, and that he will spend the larger part of this time in an idiotic state. On this account Simon ought to be removed from the Temple, in order that his enemies may not be able to circulate a report about this zealous and worthy servant of the republic, that he is guilty of the death of little Capet—that Simon's method of bringing him up killed him. And besides, in order that the same charge should not be laid to the one and great republic, and it be accused of cruelty to a poor sick child, kindly attentions should be bestowed on him."

Pétion's countenance clouded, and his eyes rested on the physician with a sinister, searching expression.

"You have a great deal of sensibility, doctor, and you appear to forget that the boy is a criminal by birth, and that the republic can have no special sympathy with him."

"For me," answered Naudin, with simplicity, "every sick person at whose bed I am called to stand, is a poor, pitiable human being, and I never stop to think whether he is a criminal or not, but merely that he is a sufferer, and then I endeavor to discover the means to assist him. The hallowed and indivisible republic, however, is an altogether too magnanimous and exalted mother of all her children not to have pity on those who are reduced to idiocy, and in sore sickness. The republic is like the sun, which pours its beams even into the dungeon of the criminal, and shines upon the just and unjust alike."

"And what do you desire that the republic should do for the offspring of tyrants?" asked Pétion, peevishly.

"I desire not much," answered Naudin, with a smile. "Let me be permitted to visit the sick child from time to time, and in his hopeless condition to procure him a little relief from his sufferings at least, and let him be treated like the child he is. Let a little diversion be allowed him. If it is not possible or practicable for him to play with children of his age, let him at least have some playthings for his amusement."

"Do you demand in earnest that the republic should condescend to provide playthings for her imprisoned criminals?" asked Pétion, with a scornful laugh.

"You have commanded me to visit the sick boy in the Temple, to examine his condition, and to prescribe the necessary remedies for his recovery. I can offer no hope of recovery to the patient, but I can afford him some relief from his sufferings. Some of my medicines are called *playthings!* It lies with you to decide whether the republic will refuse these medicines to the sick one."

"And you say that the little Capet is incurable?" asked Pétion, eagerly.

"Incurable, citizen representative."

"Well, then," said Pétion, with a cold smile, "the republic can afford to provide the last of the Capets with toys. They have for centuries toyed fearlessly with the happiness of the people, and the last thing which the people of France give back to the tyrants is some toy with which they may amuse themselves on the way to eternity. Citizen doctor, your demands shall be complied with. The first place which shall become vacant shall be given to Citizen Simon, that he may be released from prison and enjoy his freedom. The little Capet will be provided with playthings, and, besides, you are empowered to give him all needful remedies for his relief. It is your duty to care for the sick child until its death."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE HOBBY-HORSE.

In accordance with the instructions of Pétion, playthings were procured and carried into the gloomy chamber of the prince on the very next day, and set by the side of the sick boy. But Mistress Simon labored in vain trying to amuse the little Louis with them. The men danced, the wooden cocks crowed, the dogs barked, and to all these sounds the child paid no heed; it did not once open its eyes, nor care in the least for the many-colored things which the officials had brought him.

"We must try something else," said the compassionate officer. "Do you know any plaything which would be likely to please little Louis Capet?"

"Give him a riding-horse," cried Simon, with a coarse laugh. "I am convinced if the obstinate youngster should hear that there was a riding-horse outside, and that he might ride through Paris, he would be well on the spot and get up. It is pure deceit, his lying there so pale and without interest in any thing about him."

"You are very cruel, citizen," muttered the official, with a compassionate glance at the child.

"Cruel? Yes, I am cruel!" said Simon, grimly. "But it is the cursed prison air that has made me so. If I stay here a week longer, Jeanne Marie will die, and I shall become crazy. The director of the hospital told us this, and you know, citizen, that he is the most clever doctor in all France. See if you would not be cruel if you had such an idea as that in your head!"

"Well, citizen, you have at least the satisfaction of knowing that it will not last long," answered the officer, consolingly. "The first vacancy is to be given to you."

"Well, I hope it will come soon, then," said Simon, with a sigh. "I will take a vow to you. If, in a week, I shall be released from this place, and get a good situation, I will give little Capet a horse to remember me by. That is, not a horse on which he might ride out of prison, but a wooden one, on which he can ride in prison. Say, little Capet," called Simon, stooping over the bed of the child, "would you not like to have a nice wooden horse to play with?"

Over the pale lips of the boy played the faint tint of a smile, and he opened his eyes. "Yes," he said, softly—"yes; I should like to have a wooden horse, and I should have a good time with it."

"Come, citizen," said Simon, solemnly, "I take you to witness my vow. If I receive another place, I give a hobby-horse to little Capet. You grant me the privilege, citizen?"

"I allow you, Citizen Simon, and I will report the matter to the Public Welfare Committee, that it shall surprise no one by and by, and I am sure no one will gainsay you in your praiseworthy offer. For it certainly is praiseworthy to prepare a pleasure for a sick child; and the great republic, which is the gracious mother of all Frenchmen, will pity the poor child, too. I wish you success, citizen, in the fulfilment of all your hopes, and trust that you will speedily be released from your trying imprisonment."

And, in fact, this release did not have to be waited for long. A few days brought the accomplishment of Doctor

Naudin's prophecy, and the official guard, who was then sick at the Hôtel Dieu, died. The director of the hospital hastened to inform the authorities of this event, and on the same day Simon was appointed his successor. The same official who had brought the sick prince the playthings, came again to inform Simon of his release, and was delighted at the stormy outbreak of rapturous joy with which the tidings were received.

"We will be off directly," cried Simon. "Our things have all been packed for three days, and every thing is ready."

"But you must wait patiently till to-morrow, my friends," said the official, with a smile. "Your successor cannot enter upon his duties here in the Temple before to-morrow morning at ten o'clock, and till then you must be content to wait quietly."

"That is sad," sighed Simon. "The time between now and ten o'clock to-morrow morning, will lie like lead upon my shoulders. I assure you, citizen, the Temple could get along without me for one night. The two Misses Capet above stairs are locked up, and as for the little Capet down here, it is not necessary to lock him up, for he will not run away, but lie quietly here upon his mattress."

"So the child is really very sick?" asked the officer, with feeling.

"Not exactly very sick," answered Simon, indifferently; "but Doctor Naudin, who visits him every day, thinks that the youngster might not be all right in the head, and he has ordered, on this account, that his long thick hair should be cut off, that his head might be a little cooler. So Jeanne Marie is going to cut it off, and that will probably be the last service that she will have to do for him. We are going to clear out of this—we are going to clear out of this!"

"And have you really nothing more to do for the little Capet, than merely to cut off his hair?" asked the officer with a fixed, searching look.

"No," answered Simon, with a laugh; "nothing but that. Oh! yes, there is something else. I did not think of that. My vow to you! I forgot that. I swore that, if I were to get away from here, I would give little Capet a hobby-horse."

"I am glad, Citizen Simon, that you remember your promise," said the officer, gravely. "I must tell you that the Public Welfare Committee, to which I communicated your intention, was very curious to know whether Citizen Simon would remember to carry it into effect. It is on this account that I was instructed to inform you of your transfer, and to report to them whether you intended to keep your promise. Your superiors will rejoice to learn that you are a man of honor, with whom it is a sacred duty to keep his word; and who, in prosperous days, does not forget to do what he promised to do in less propitious times. So, go and buy for little Capet the promised hobby-horse, and I will inform the Welfare Committee that it was not necessary for me to remind you of your vow, and that you are not only a good citizen, but a good man as well. Go and buy the plaything, and make your arrangements to leave the Temple to-morrow morning at ten o'clock, and to enter upon your new duties as collector of customs at Porte Macon."

"The great bell of Notre Dame will not have growled out its ten strokes to-morrow morning, before Jeanne Marie and I, with our goods, will have left the place," replied Simon, with a laugh. "And now I will run and fulfil my promise." He clapped his red-flannel cap upon his black, thick hair, and left the Temple with a hurried step. As the porter opened the door of the court which led to the street, for the worthy citizen and "man of honor," Simon stopped a moment to chat, telling him of his new situation, and of the vow which he was about to discharge.

"Do not wonder, therefore, citizen," he said, "if you see me come back, by-and-by, with a horse—with this distinction, that it will not be the horse that carries me, but that it will be I that will carry the horse. I was such a fool as to promise little Capet a horse, and I must keep my word, particularly as the Committee of Safety allows it."

"Well, if that is so," said the porter, with mock gravity, "I shall let you in, even if you do not make your appearance until night. With the permission of the Safety Committee, every thing; without it, nothing—for I want to keep my head a little longer on my shoulders."

"And I do not grudge you the privilege," said Simon, with a broad grin. "We know very little about what we have here, but much less about the place where the dear machine takes us. But, if you like, you can ask Roger, the official guard, whether I have permission to bring the wooden horse into the Temple. He is inside, and will probably be there when I come back."

He nodded to the porter, and went out into the street. As the door closed behind him, Simon stopped a moment, and cast a quick glance up and down the street. Above, at the corner of the little cross-street, stood quietly a young commissioner in his blouse, apparently waiting for some one to employ him. Simon crossed the street and went up to him.

"Well," asked the latter aloud, "have you any thing for me to do, citizen?"

"Yes," answered Simon, softly and quickly. "Yes, Toulan, I am all ready for you. To-morrow morning, at ten o'clock, I leave the Temple."

"I know it," whispered Toulan. "But speak loudly. There stands a man who seems to be watching us."

"Come," cried Simon, loudly. "I want you to accompany me to a store where they sell playthings, and afterward you must help carry back what I buy, for it will be too large and too heavy for me alone."

Toulan followed him without replying, and the two went quietly and with an air of indifference through the busy crowd of men. At the corner of a neighboring street the commissioner came in gentle contact with another, who was standing on the curbstone, and was looking earnestly down the street.

"Beg pardon, citizen," said Toulan, loudly, and then added, softly, "to-morrow morning, at ten o'clock. The washerwomen will take charge of the dirty linen at the door. At exactly ten the wagons and the boys must start. The hobby-horse will be filled."

"Yes, it shall be filled," and, with an indifferent air, he passed by the two, and walked down the Helder street. The farther he went the more rapid became his steps, and when he at last entered a narrow, solitary alley, where he might hope to be less observed, his quick walk became a run, which he continued till he reached the Rue Vivienne.

He then moderated his pace, and went quietly into a toy-shop, whose attractive windows and open door were directed to the street. The clerk, who stood behind the counter, asked, with a quiet air, what he desired.

"First, allow me to sit down, citizen," answered the commissioner, as he sank upon the rush-chair which stood before the counter. "There, and now, if you want to do me a service, just give me a glass of water."

"Halloo, John," cried the clerk to the errand-boy, who was standing in the back part of the store. "Bring a glass of water from the well! Hasten!"

The boy took a glass and sprang out of the door into the street.

"In a quarter of an hour they will be here," said the commissioner, quickly. "Inform the marquis, if you please."

"The cabinet-maker, Lamber, you mean," whispered the clerk. "He is not as far away as you; he lives directly opposite, and he has been standing all day at the house-door waiting for the sign."

"Then give it to him, dear baron," said the commissioner; and as the boy came in just then with the water, he hastily seized the glass, and took a swallow so immense as to perfectly satisfy the boy, who was looking at him.

The clerk had, in the mean time, gone to the shop-door, and looking across at the opposite house, he drew a blue handkerchief, with a red border, from his pocket, and slowly raised it to his face.

The man in the blouse, standing at the door of the low house across the street, nodded slightly, and stepped back out of sight.

"Well," cried the commissioner, "now that I have taken breath, and have had a good drink, I will tell you why I have run so. I have directed a citizen to you who wants to buy some playthings, and something very fine, I suppose, as he brings a commissioner along with him to carry the things home. Now I want to know what per cent. of the profit you get from him you are willing to give me, for you cannot expect, citizen, that I should give my recommendation gratis."

"I am not the owner of the store," replied the clerk, with a shrug. "I have been here only a week, and manage the business merely while the owner is absent for a short time on a necessary journey. So I can give no fees. But ask the boy whether in such cases Mr. Duval has paid money. He has been here longer than I."

"Mr. Duval has paid every commissioner, who has brought him such news, two centums on the franc," said the boy, with an important air.

"Well, then, I will give you two centums on the franc, provided that the citizen buys more than a franc's worth."

"Aha! there comes the man," cried the commissioner, pointing at Simon, who just then entered the store with Toulan. "Well, citizen, now make a very handsome purchase, for the more you buy, the better I shall like it."

"Yes, I believe you," replied Simon, laughing; "that is the way in all stores. I want something nice; I want to buy a hobby-horse. But mind you, citizen, show me one of your best ones, a real blood-horse, for I tell you that he who is to ride it is of real blood himself."

"We happen unfortunately to have a limited supply of the article," said the clerk, with a shrug. "They do not come exactly in our line. But there has been so much demand for hobby-horses of late that we have ordered some, and if you will wait a few days, citizen—"

"A few days!" interrupted Simon, angrily. "Not a few hours, not a few minutes will I wait. If you have no hobby-horses, tell me, and I will go elsewhere to make my purchases."

He turned to go, but the clerk held him back. "Wait only a minute," he said. "I should not like to lose your custom, and I think it possible that I can procure you a fine horse. The cabinet-maker, who makes our horses, lives just opposite, and he has promised to deliver them to-morrow. The boy shall go over and see if they are not ready."

"We would rather go over with him, citizen. If we find what is wanted, we shall need to go no farther."

"It is true, that will be the best course," said Simon. "Come, commissioner."

"I will go along to have the business all rightly done," said the clerk. "Here, John, take my place behind the counter while I am gone."

Simon had already crossed the street by the side of Toulan. The clerk followed with the second commissioner.

"Why have you not got rid of the boy, Count St. Prix?" asked the latter.

"It was impossible, Count Frotté," answered the former in a whisper. "Duval is a very nervous man, and he supposed that it would excite suspicion if the boy, who is well known in the neighborhood, should disappear at just the time when he should be away. He is right, perhaps, and at any rate the thing is unavoidable. The sly chore-boy has noticed nothing, I hope, and we shall reach our goal without any hindrance. You are going to London to-morrow morning?"

"Yes, count. And you? what is your direction?"

"To Coblentz, to the royal princes," replied Count St. Prix. "Only I suspect that we shall not both of us reach the end of our journeys."

"At any rate not with the children that we shall take with us," whispered the other, as they entered the house of the cabinet-maker.

They found Simon and Toulan in the large workshop busily engaged in bargaining with the cabinet-maker, who had shown them six tolerably large hobby-horses, and was descanting on their beauties.

"It seems to me they all look very much alike," said Simon. "Tell me, commissioner, which of these race-horses pleases you best."

"This with the red flanks," said Toulan, laying his hand upon the largest one.

"It is an immense creature," said Simon, with a laugh. "Still, the red flanks are pretty, and if we can agree about the price I will buy the animal."

They did agree, and after Simon had gravely paid the twenty francs, he and Toulan took the horse on their shoulders and marched down the street.

"Do all those people know about our secret?" asked Simon, as they strode forward.

"No, only the cabinet-maker knows about it, and he will leave Paris to-morrow and carry the prince to a place of safety."

"For God's sake, do not speak so loudly!" whispered Simon, casting an anxious look around. "But why do you yourself not go away with the boy and leave Paris, where you are constantly in danger?"

"I cannot," answered Toulan, solemnly.

"Cannot! what forbids you?"

"The vow that I gave to Marie Antoinette, to rescue her children from the Temple or to die."

"Well, but to-morrow you hope to fulfil your vow, and then you can go."

"I shall fulfil to-morrow but the half of my vow. I shall, if you help me, and my plan succeeds, release the son of the queen, but the daughter will remain behind in prison. You see, therefore, that I cannot leave Paris, for the daughter and sister-in-law of the queen are still prisoners, and I must release them."

"But I should rather that you would go away with the boy, and never come back to Paris," said Simon, thoughtfully.

"How so? Do you not trust me?"

"I trust no one," replied Simon, gloomily. "You might some day, when it might suit your humor, or in order to save yourself, betray me, and report me to the Committee of Safety."

"What, I! And ought I not to fear too? Could not you betray me as well?"

"You know very well that I shall take care not to disclose a word of this whole history, for to disclose it would be to write my own death-warrant. But hush, now; hush! there is the Temple, and it seems to me as if the very walls looked at me maliciously, as if they wanted to say, 'There comes a traitor!' Ah, Toulan, it is a bad thing to have an accusing conscience!"

"Help me faithfully to save the prince, Simon, and you will have a good conscience all the rest of your life, for you will have done a grand and noble deed."

"In your eyes," whispered Simon, "but not in those of the Convention, and when they learn about it—but here we are, and our talk and reconsideration are too late."

He struck three times with his fist against the closed gate of the outer court. The porter opened, and let the two men in, only saying that the guard had given his special consent to the bringing in of the hobby-horse.

"But about the commissioner whom you bring with you," said the porter, reflectively, "he did not make any mention, and I can only allow him to take your plaything into the second court. He must not go into the Temple."

"It is no particular wish of mine to go into a prison," answered the commissioner, carelessly. "It is a good deal easier to get in than to get out again. Well, take hold, Citizen Simon; forward!"

They walked on to the second court. "Now, then," whispered Toulan, "for caution and thoughtfulness! To-morrow at ten o'clock I will be standing before the door, and you will call me in to help you in your moving."

"I wish it were all over," groaned Simon. "It seems to me as if my head were shaking on my shoulders, and my heart beats as if I were a young girl."

"Courage, Simon, only courage! Remember that to-morrow you are to be a free and a rich man. Then, as soon as you give your basket to the washerwoman at the Macon gate, I will pay you the promised twenty thousand francs. And—"

"Halt!" cried the sentinel at the entrance to the Temple. "No one can go in here without a pass."

"You do not want a pass for my rocking-horse, brother citizen, do you?" asked Simon, with a laugh.

"Nonsense! I am speaking about the commissioner."

"He is going of himself, and does not want to go in. But look him square in the face, for he will come to-morrow morning again. I have secured him in advance, to help me in moving out. Bring a wagon along, commissioner, for the things will be too heavy to carry without one. And now help put the horse on my shoulders. So! Well, then, to-morrow morning at ten, commissioner."

"To-morrow morning at ten," replied Toulan, nodding to Simon, and slowly sauntering through the court. He stopped at the outer gate, told the porter that he was going to assist Simon in his moving on the morrow, and then asked in an indifferent tone whether Simon's successor at the Temple was appointed.

"Why, would you like the place?" asked the porter, gruffly.

"No, indeed, not I! I have no taste for such work. It must be an awful air in the prison."

"It is that," replied the porter. "And so after Simon has moved out, they are going to cleanse the place a little, and give it an airing, and the successor will move in about noon."

"Well, I don't envy the man who moves in," said Toulan, with a laugh. "Good-by, citizen, we shall see each other to-morrow."

He went out into the street, and slowly sauntered along. At the end of it he stopped and gave a trifle to a beggar who, supported by a crutch, was leaning against a house.

"Is it all right thus far?"

"Yes, marquis, thank God, thus far every thing has gone on well. The horse is in the Temple, and nothing is discovered."

"May the grace of God stand by us to-morrow!" whispered the beggar. "You are sure that all the arrangements are carefully attended to?"

"Entirely sure, M. de Jarjayes. While you are leaving Paris in the garb of a washerwoman, our two allies will both be driving out of two other gates, with the boy, in stylish carriages."

"And it will be you, Toulan, who will have saved the King of France," whispered the beggar. "Oh! be sure that all France will thank you for it some day, and give you the title of savior of your country!"

"Baron," said Toulan, shaking his head, "for me there is but one title of honor, that which the Queen of France gave me. I am called Fidèle, and I want no other name. But this one I will maintain so long as I live. Good-by till we meet to-morrow at the Porte Macon!"

Little Prince Louis Charles received the hobby-horse, which Simon carried into the chamber, with a little more interest than in the case of the other playthings. He even raised himself up a little on his mattress, and directed a long, searching gaze at the tall, handsome wooden creature.

"Well," asked the official, who had gone with Simon into the dungeon, and had watched the effect of the toy, "well, how does your horse please you, little Capet?"

The boy nodded slowly, but made no reply; he only reached out his long, thin, right hand, and made a motion as if he wanted to rise.

"To-morrow, little Capet," cried Jeanne Marie, holding him back. "To-day you must keep entirely still, so the doctor said, and I will cut your hair off directly, as the doctor ordered. But I should like to have you here, citizen, and oversee the operation. The boy will look much changed, when his long, yellow hair is cut off, and afterward it might be supposed—"

"Yes, certainly," interrupted Simon, with a laugh, "afterward it might be supposed that it is not the stupid youngster who has troubled us so long, that out of pure tenderness and love we had taken him along with us."

"No one would consider the republican Simon capable of such a thing," replied the official, "and besides, the boy will stay here, and no substitute for him can fall out of the clouds. Be free from care, Simon. I myself shall recognize the boy to-morrow, and if he should look changed in appearance, I shall know how it comes."

"Yes, he will know how it comes," said Simon, with a grin, as he watched the retreating form of the official, now leaving the prison.

"Lock the door, Simon," whispered Jeanne Marie. "We must let the boy out of this if he is not to be stifled!"

"No, no," said Simon, motioning his wife to retreat from the hobby-horse which she was approaching. "He will not be stifled, for beneath the saddle-cloth there are nothing but air-holes, and he can endure it a good while. We must above all things be cautious and prepared for every thing. It would be a fine thing, would it not, if the officials who are on guard in the Temple should conceive the idea of making the rounds a second time for the purpose of inspection. He cannot be carried out before it strikes ten from Notre Dame. We will, however, give him a little more air."

He removed the saddle with care, which was let into the back of the wooden horse, and listened at the opening.

"He breathes very peacefully and evenly," he then said, softly. "He seems to be asleep. Jeanne Marie, hold the saddle in your hand, and at the least approach fit it again in its place. I will now take hold and pack our things."

When the night came, and the last rounds had been made past the closed doors of Simon's rooms, and the officials had withdrawn into the great hall, where they stayed during the night-watch, there was an unusual stir within Simon's apartments. Jeanne Marie, who had thrown herself in her clothes upon the bed, slipped out from beneath the coverlet. Simon, who was standing near the door listening, advanced to the little prince, and bade him in a whisper to get up.

The child, which now seemed to have recovered from its indifference and stupidity, rose at once, and at Simon's further command made an effort to remove his clothes, and to put on in their place the coarse woollen suit and the linen trowsers which Simon drew out of his bed and handed to him.

The toilet was soon completed, and the little prince looked with a timid, inquiring glance at Simon, who was regarding him with a searching eye.

"And the stockings, master?" he asked. "Do not I have any stockings?"

"No," growled Simon—"no, the son of a washerwoman wants no stockings. There are some wooden shoes which will be laid for you in the basket, and you put them on afterward, if we are fortunate in getting away. But you must cut his hair, Jeanne Marie. With long hair he will not look like a boy from the people."

Jeanne Marie shuddered. "I cannot," she whispered; "it would seem to me as if I were cutting off his head, and the woman in white would stand behind, and pierce me through with her great eyes."

"Come, come, that old story again!" growled Simon. "Give me the scissors, then; I will take care of it, for the boy must part with his hair before he goes into the basket. Come, come, do not shrink and curl up so; I was not speaking of the guillotine-basket, but of your dirty-clothes basket. Come, Capet, I want to cut your hair."

He took the great shears from the work-basket, and sa down on a stool by the side of the table, on which burned a dim tallow candle, throwing an uncertain light through the apartment. "Come, Capet!"

The boy stole up with an insecure step, and shrank together when Simon seized him and drew him between his knees.

"Do not hurt him, Simon. Be careful of him," whispered Jeanne Marie, sinking on the floor and folding her hands. "Remember, husband, that she is here, and that she is looking at you, and that she bores into my head with her eyes when you do any harm to the child."

Simon looked around with a shy and anxious glance. "It is high time that we were away from here," he growled—"high time, if I am not to be crazy as well as you. Stoop down, Capet, so that I can cut your hair off." The child let his head fall; but a faint, carefully suppressed sob came from his breast, while Simon's shears went clashing through his locks, severing them from his head.

"What are you crying for, Capet?" asked Simon, zealously going forward with his work.

"I am so sorry, master, to have my locks cut off."

"You probably suppose, you vain monkey, that your locks are particularly beautiful?"

"Oh, no, master! It is only," sighed the boy with his eyes full of tears—"it is only because *her* hand has rested on them, and because *she* kissed them when I saw her the last time."

"Who is *she?*" asked Simon, roughly.

"My mamma queen," replied Louis with such a tone of tenderness as to bring tears into the eyes of Jeanne Marie, and even to move the cobbler himself.

"Hush!" he said, softly. "Hush! you must never call your mother by such a name. After to-morrow morning you are to be the son of a washerwoman. Remember that, and now be still! There, your hair is done now. Pick up the locks from the floor and lay them on the table, Jeanne Marie. We must leave them here, that the officer may find them in the morning, and not wonder if he does not recognize the urchin. Now we will bring the wash-basket, and see whether young Capet will go into it."

He brought out of the chamber a high, covered basket, grasped the boy, thrust him in, and ordered him to lie down on the bottom of the basket.

"He exactly fits!" said Simon to his wife. "We will now throw some dirty clothes over him, and he can spend the night in the basket. We must be ready for any thing; for there are many distrustful officials, and it would not be the first time that they have made examinations in the night. Little Capet must remain in the basket, and now we will take his substitute out of the horse."

He went to the hobby-horse, took out some screws which ran along the edges of the upholstery, and then carefully removed the upper part of the animal from the lower. In the hollow thus brought to light, lay a pale, sick boy, with closed eyes—the nephew of the Marquis de Jarjayes, the last descendant of the Baroness de Tardif, now, as all his ancestors had done, to give his life for his king.

Jeanne Marie rose from her knees, took a light from the table, and approached the child, which was lying in its confined space as in a coffin.

The little prince had raised himself up in his basket, and his pale face was visible as he looked, out of his large blue eyes, with curiosity and amazement at the sick child.

"He does not look like the king's son," whispered Jeanne Marie, after a long, searching study of the pale, bloated face of the idiot.

"We will put his clothes on at once, then he will look all right, for clothes make the man. Stand up, little one, you need to get up. You are not to stay any longer in your curious prison."

"He does not understand you," said Jeanne Marie. "Do not you remember that Toulan told us that the boy is perfectly deaf and dumb?"

"True; I had forgotten it, and yet it is fortunate for us, for a deaf and dumb person cannot disclose any dangerous secrets. Come, Jeanne Marie, give me the clothes; we will dress up the little mute like a prince."

They put upon him the velvet jacket, the short trowsers of black cloth, the shoes and stockings of the prince, who still was looking out of his basket at the pale, softly-moaning child, which was now placed by Simon and his wife on the mattress.

"There," said Simon, throwing the coverlet over the boy, "there, the royal prince is ready, and we can say, as they used to do at St. Denis, when they brought a new occupant into the royal vault, '*Le roi est mort, vive le roi!*' Lie quietly in your basket, Capet, for you see you are deposed, and your successor has your throne."

"Master," whispered Louis, anxiously and timidly, "master, may I ask you a question?"

"Well, yes, you may, you little nameless toad. What is it?"

"Master, will the sick child have to die, if I am saved?"

"What do you mean, youngster? What are you at?"

"I only mean, master—I only wanted to say that if the poor boy must die, if he takes my place, why—I should rather stay here. For—"

"Well, go on, stupid! what do you mean by your 'for?' You would rather remain here?"

"Yes, master, if another is to die and be beaten and tortured, for blows hurt so much, and I should not like to have another boy receive them instead of me. That would be wicked in me, and—"

"And you are a stupid fellow, and do not know any thing you are talking about," said Simon, shaking his fist at him. "Just put on airs, and speak another such a foolish word, and I will not only beat you to death, but I will beat this miserable, whining youngster to death too, and then you will certainly be to blame for it. Down with you into the basket, and if you venture to put your head up again, and if to-morrow you are not obedient and do just what we bid you, I will beat you and him, both of you, to pieces, and pack you into the clothes-basket, and carry you away. Down into the basket!"

The boy sank down out of sight; and when, after a little while, Jeanne Marie cautiously looked to see whether he had fallen asleep, she saw that Louis Charles was kneeling on the bottom of the basket, and raising his folded hands up to heaven.

"Simon," she whispered—"Simon, do not laugh at me and scold me. You say, I know, that there is no God, and the republic has done away with Deity, and the Church, and the priests. But let me once kneel down and pray to Him with whom little Louis Charles is talking now, and to whom the Austrian spoke on the scaffold."

Without waiting for Simon's answer, Jeanne Marie sank upon her knees. Folding her hands, she leaned her forehead on the rim of the basket, and softly whispered, "Louis Charles, do you hear me?"

"Yes," lisped the child, "I hear you."

"I ask your forgiveness," whispered Jeanne Marie. "I have sinned dreadfully against you, but remorse has taken hold of my heart, and tears it in pieces and gives me no rest day or night. Oh, forgive me, son of the queen, and when you pray, implore your mother to forgive me the evil that I have done her."

"I will pray to my dear mamma queen for you, and I know she will forgive you, for she was so very good, and she always said to me that we must forgive our enemies; and I had to swear to my dear papa that I would forget and forgive all the wrong that men should do to me. And so I forgive you, and I will forget all the bad things that Master Simon has done to me, for my papa and my mamma wished me to."

Jeanne Marie let her head sink lower, and pressed her hands firmly against her lips to repress the outcries which her remorseful conscience prompted. Simon seemed to understand nothing of this soft whispering; he was busily engaged in packing up his things, and no one saw him hastily draw his hand over his eyes, as if he wanted to wipe away the dust which suddenly prevented his seeing.

Gradually it grew still in the gloomy room. The whispering in the basket ceased. Jeanne Marie had retired to her bed, and had wept herself to sleep. Upon the mattress lay the sick, sobbing child, the substitute of King Louis XVII., who was in the basket.

Simon was the only one who was awake, and there must have been dismal thoughts that busied him. He sat upon the stool near the candle, which was nearly burned out, his forehead was corrugated and clouded, his lips were closely pressed together, and the little, flashing eyes looked out into the empty space full of anger and threatenings.

"It must be," he muttered at last, "it must be. I should otherwise not have a moment's peace, and always feel the knife at my throat. One of us must be away from here, in order that he may disclose the other. I will not be that one, it must be Toulan."

He stood up with the air of one who had made a fixed, unchangeable resolve, and stretched his bony, crooked limbs. Then he threw one last look at the stranger-child, that lay moaning and groaning on his mattress, fell upon his bed, and soon his long-drawn, sonorous breathing disclosed the fact that Master Simon was asleep.

On the next morning there reigned in the lower stories of the Temple a busy, stirring life. Master Simon was preparing to move, and all his household goods were set out in the court, in order to be transferred to the wagon that Commissioner Toulan had ordered. Close to the wagon stood one of the officials of the Public Safety, and examined every article of furniture that was put into it, opening even the bandboxes and pillows to look into them. Not, as he said, the Welfare Committee doubted the honesty of the faithful and zealous servant of the republic, but only to satisfy the forms, and to comply with the laws, which demanded that the authorities should have a watchful eye on every thing that was at all connected with the family of the tyrants.

"And you will do me a great pleasure if you will examine every thing with the utmost care. In the republic we are all alike, and I do not see why I should not be served to-day as another would be on the morrow. You know, probably, that I have been appointed collector at Porte Macon, and after to-morrow I shall have to inspect the goods of other people. It is all fair that I should have my turn to-day. Besides, you will not have much more to examine, we are almost through; I believe there is only a basket with the soiled clothes yet to come. That is the sacred possession of my wife, and she was going to bring it out herself, with the commissioner's help. Yes, there they come."

At that moment, Jeanne Marie appeared in the court, followed by Toulan. They brought along, by two ropes which served as handles, a large and longish basket, whose half-opened cover brought to view all kinds of women's clothes.

"Room there," cried Simon, with a laugh, "room for the Citoyenne Simon and her costly dowry!"

"Come, no joking, Simon," said his wife, threatening him with her fist and laughing. "If my dowry is not costly enough, I will only ask you to provide me with better things."

"Your dowry is magnificent," said Simon, "and there is not a single article lacking to make it complete. Come, I will help the commissioner put the basket in the wagon, for it is too heavy for you, my fairest one!"

He took hold of the basket with his strong arm, and helped the commissioner swing it into the wagon.

"But let me look first into the basket, as my duty demands," said the official. "You are too quick! You know, citizen, that I must examine all your goods. The law compels me to."

"Then I beg you to climb up into the wagon and open the basket," said Simon, calmly. "You cannot want us to take the heavy thing down again for you to examine it."

"I do not ask that, citizen, but I must examine the basket."

The official sprang into the wagon, but Jeanne Marie was quicker than he, and stood close by the basket, whose cover was partly opened.

"Look in, citizen," she said, with dignity. "Convince yourself that only the clothing of a woman is in it, and then tell the republic that you found it necessary to examine the basket of the famous knitter of the guillotine, as if Jeanne Marie was a disguised duchess, who wanted to fly from the hand of justice."

"I beg your pardon," said the official, "every one knows and honors the knitter of the guillotine, but—"

"But you are curious, and want to see some of my clothes. Well, look at them!" She raised those which lay at the top, and held them up to the official with a laugh.

"And down below? What is farther down in the basket?"

"Farther down," replied Jeanne Marie, with an expression of the greatest indignation and the most outraged modesty, "farther down are my dirty clothes, and I hope the republic will not consider it necessary to examine these too. I would at least oppose it, and call every female friend I have to my help." *

"Oh! you will not have to do that," replied the official, with a friendly nod of the head. "It would be presumptuous to go farther with the examination of your goods, and the republic regards with respect the mysteries of an honorable wife."

He jumped down from the wagon, while Jeanne Marie, still wearing an angry look, laid the clothes back into the basket, and shut the cover down.

"Can we go now?" she asked, taking her seat on a low stool which happened to be near the great basket.

"Yes, if the official has nothing against it, we can go," answered Simon. "Our goods are all loaded."

"Then go on, I have nothing against it, and I wish you and your wife much happiness and joy in your new career."

The official waved them a last gracious adieu with the hand, and the wagon started. Alongside of the great, hard-mouthed and long-haired horse that drew the cart, walked the commissioner, in order, once in a while, when they had to turn a corner, to seize the bridle and give it a powerful jerk. At the side of the wagon strode Simon, keeping a watchful eye upon his possessions, and carefully setting every thing aright which was in danger of being shaken off upon the pavement. Above in the carriage near the great basket sat Jeanne Marie, the former knitter of the guillotine. Her naked brown arm rested upon the basket, on whose bottom, covered with dirty linen and Mistress Simon's clothes, was the son of Marie Antoinette, King Louis XVII., making his entrance into the world which should have for him only sufferings and illusions, shattered hopes and dethroned ideals.

This happened on the 19th of January, 1794, and on the very day in which the unhappy King Louis XVII. was leaving the Temple, his sister Theresa, who was still living with her Aunt Elizabeth in the upper rooms, wrote in her

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* Madame Simon's own words, reported from her own account, which she gave in the year 1819 to the Sisters of Mercy who cared for her in her last sickness. The sisterhood of the female hospital in the rue Sèvres publicly repeated, in the year 1851, this statement of Jeanne Marie Simon, who died there in 1819. It was in the civil process brought against the Duke de Normandy, who was accused of giving himself out falsely as King Louis XVII., and who could not be proved not to be he.

diary (known subsequently by the title "Récit des événements arrivés au Temple, par Madame Royale") the following words: "On the 19th of January my aunt and I heard beneath us, in the room of my brother, a great noise which made us suspect that my brother was leaving the Temple. We were convinced of it when, looking through the keyhole of the door, we saw goods carried away. On the following day we heard the door of the room, in which my brother had been, opened, and recognized the steps of men walking around, which confirmed us in the belief that he had been carried away."

The pitiful wagon, which gave its hospitality to the knitter of the revolution, as well as to a king, drove slowly and carefully through the streets, unnoticed by the people who hastily passed by. Now and then they encountered a commissioner who came up to Toulan, greeted him as an acquaintance, and asked after his welfare. Toulan nodded to them confidentially and answered them loudly that he was very well, and that he was helping Simon move out of the Temple and going with him to Porte Macon.

The commissioners then wished him a pleasant journey, and went their way; but the farther they were from the wagon, the quicker were their steps, and here and there they met other commissioners, to whom they repeated Toulan's words, and who then went from there and again told them over to their friends in the streets, in quiet, hidden chambers, and in brilliant palaces. In one such palace the tidings caused a singular commotion. Count Frotté, who lived there, and whom the public permitted to live in Paris, ordered his travelling carriage to be brought out at once. The postilion, with four swift horses, had already stood in the court below half an hour, waiting for this order. The horses were quickly harnessed to the carriage, which was well filled with trunks; and scarcely had it reached the front door, when the count hurried down the grand staircase, thickly wrapped in his riding-furs. At his right sat a little boy of scarcely ten years, a velvet cap, trimmed with fur, upon his short, fair hair; the slender, graceful form concealed with a long velvet cloak, that fell down as far as the shoes with golden, jewelled buckles.

Count Frotté seemed to bestow special care and attention upon this boy, for he not only had him sit on his right, but remained standing near the door, to give precedence to the boy, and then hastened to follow him. He pressed the servants back who stood near the open door, bowed respectfully, and gave his hand to the lad to assist him in ascending. The youth received these tokens of respect quietly, and seemed to take it as a matter of course that Count Frotté should carefully put furs around his feet and body, in order to protect him from every draft. As soon as this was done, the count entered the carriage, and took his place at the left of the boy. The servant closed the carriage-door with a loud slam, and the steward advanced with respectful mien, and asked whither the count would order to go.

"The road to Puy," said the count, with a loud voice, and the steward repeated to the postilion just as loudly and clearly, "The road to Puy."

The carriage drove thunderingly out of the court-door, and the servant looked after it till it disappeared, and then followed the house-steward, who motioned him to come into the cabinet.

"I have something to tell you, citizen," said the steward, with a weighty air, "but first I must beg you to make me a solemn promise that you will continue a faithful and obedient servant of the count, and prove in no way false to your oath and your duty."

The servant pledged himself solemnly, and the steward continued: "The count has undertaken a journey which is not to be spoken of, and is to remain, if possible, a secret. I demand of you, therefore, that if any one asks where the count has gone, you answer that you do not know. But above all things, you are not to say that the count is not travelling alone, but in company with the young—gentleman, whose name and rank I know just as little about as you. Will you promise to faithfully heed my words?"

The servant asserted it with solemn oaths and an expression of deep reverence. The steward beckoned to him to go, and then looked at him for a long time, and with a singular expression as he withdrew.

"He is a spy of the Safety Committee," he whispered to himself. "I am convinced that he is so, and he will certainly go at once and report to the authorities, and they will break their heads thinking what the count has to do in Puy, and who the boy is who accompanies my lord. Well, that is exactly what we want: to put the bloodhounds and murderers on a false scent. That is just the object of the count, and for that purpose M. Morin de Guerivière has lent his only son, for all that we have and are, our lives, our children, and every thing else, belong to our king and lord. I hope, therefore, that the count's plan will succeed, and the Safety Committee be put on a false scent."

Meanwhile the pitiful carriage containing Simon's goods had slowly taken its way through the streets and halted at its goal, the custom-house near Porte Macon. Before the building stood a woman in the neat and tasteful costume of the washerwomen from the village of Vannes, which then, as now, was the abode of the washerwomen of Paris.

"Well," cried the woman, with a loud laugh, helping Mistress Simon dismount from the wagon—"well, you have come at last. For two hours I have been waiting for you, for you ordered me to be here at eleven, and now it is one. What will my husband and my little boy say about my coming home so late?"

"I beg your pardon," said Jeanne Marie, with a kindly voice. "Our ride was a good deal slower than I thought, for the things were packed only loosely, and if we had ridden faster they would easily have been injured. But I will not detain you longer, and you shall have my wash at once. There are a great many clothes this time, and I have therefore thrown them all at once into the basket; so you can put the basket right upon your wagon and bring the things back in it. Halloa, Simon, and you, commissioner, take hold and lift the basket down, and carry it out to the washerwoman's wagon that is standing near the gate."

The two men immediately lifted the great basket out, and carried it to the open cart which stood there, in which lay arranged in regular order great bundles of dirty linen. Near the gate stood the sub-collector, whose superior Simon now was, and it therefore did not occur to him to examine the basket which his new chief was putting in the washerwoman's wagon. Some busybodies who stood around turned their whole attention to the wagon which contained the furniture and goods of the new collector, who was, of course, a very important person in this remote quarter, and Jeanne Marie endeavored with her loud words and choleric gesticulations to fasten the attention of the idlers upon herself. Nobody regarded the two men, who had just put the basket into the washerwoman's cart, and no one heard the words that they softly spoke together.

The washerwoman had raised the cover, and was rolling around the clothes, as if she wanted to examine the contents of the basket.

"Sire," she whispered, softly, as she did so—"sire, do you hear me?"

A weak, faint voice replied, "I hear you."

"And shall you be able to bear it, if you stay a little longer in your hiding-place?"

"Oh yes, I shall be able to bear it; but I am anxious, and I *should* like to be away from here."

The washerwoman closed the cover of the basket, and sprang down from the wagon. "Every thing is in order," she said, "and it is high time that I should be off. I have a long way to go, and my husband and child are expecting me."

"Then go, with God's blessing," said the commissioner, shaking hands with the washerwoman as if she were an old acquaintance. "Go, with God's blessing, and may He protect you from all calamity, and bless you with happiness and joy!"

He spoke loudly, as if this was intended for the ear of some person besides the washerwoman. And another *had* heard the words of Toulan, and a soft and tremulous voice called: "Farewell, Fidèle; I thank you, dear Toulan."

The wagon was at once in motion, and drove quickly down the street through the rows of small houses in the suburbs. The two men stood and looked after it till the washerwoman's carriage disappeared in a cloud of dust.

Toulan raised his eyes slowly to heaven, and a pious expression illumined his good, energetic countenance.

"Thou lookest down upon me, my queen and mistress," he said, softly and inaudibly. "I feel the glance of thy heavenly eyes, and it rests like a hallowed blessing upon my thankful heart. I know, my queen, that thou art satisfied with me this hour, and it seems to me as if thy loved voice were whispering above me in the air the word Fidèle. Give me now thy blessing, that I may end my work, and rescue the daughter and the sister as I have rescued the son. My life is devoted to thy service, and I shall save all thy dear ones or die!"

"Well, Toulan," said Simon, softly, "I have kept my word, and little Capet is released. Are you going to keep yours?"

"Certainly I shall," said Toulan, whose glance slowly fell from heaven, and whose face still glowed like one in a trance. "Yes, Simon, I shall keep my word to you as you have yours to me. Come into your house, that I may pay you."

He withdrew quickly from the gate and entered the house which thereafter was to be the house of the collector Simon. All was going on busily there, for Jeanne Marie had impressed into her service not only the sub-collector but some of the curious spectators, and she scolded her husband, who was just coming in with Toulan, for talking too long with the washerwoman instead of helping her.

"Do you two take the heavy mattresses and carry them into the next room."

The two men quickly obeyed, and bore the mattresses into the chamber. Then they locked themselves in. Toulan took several rolls from the great waistcoat which he wore under his blue blouse, broke them asunder, and let the gold-pieces fall out upon the mattress.

"Count them, Simon," he said, "to see that there are exactly two hundred and fifty double gold-pieces, all bearing the exalted symbols of 'the one, great, and indivisible republic.' May they bring you joy, and be a reward for the great good fortune which you have brought to me, and to all who love the king and his house."

"But will no one reveal me?" asked Simon, anxiously, while busily engaged in collecting the gold-pieces, and hiding them between the mattresses. "Say, Toulan, will no one divulge and report me to the authorities?"

"Be quiet, Simon, and fear nothing. To betray you would be at the same time to betray the great cause which we serve, and to surrender the young king to the persecution of his enemies. But no one knows, excepting me, that of your own free will you have helped save the king. With express reference to your safety, I have made all the other allies believe that I have deceived you, and that you know nothing of the concealment of the child. So be entirely without concern. Only Toulan knows your secret, and Toulan is silent as the grave. But let us go out now and help your wife bring the things into the house, and afterward you can let me go without any further leave-taking. Farewell, citizen; may you be entirely successful in your new field of labor."

He nodded with a friendly air to Simon, and as Jeanne Marie just then called the commissioner with a loud voice, Toulan hastily opened the door and hurried to her.

Simon followed him with a long, dark look. Then he slowly shook his head, and his eye kindled.

"It must be," he said to himself, softly. "I should otherwise have no rest day or night, and it would be worse than in the Temple. He said so himself: only Toulan knows my secret. So if Toulan dies, my secret dies with Toulan, and is buried with him, and I can then enjoy my life, and shall not need to live in anxiety, and in perpetual fear of being betrayed. But," he continued, after a brief pause, "what is done, must be done quickly, otherwise I may fall into the very pit I have digged for Toulan! If the little Capet is fairly carried to a place of safety, and escapes out of the republic, Toulan can avenge himself by reporting the whole story and bringing me to misfortune. I must, therefore, while I am secure, take away from the fellow the means of betraying me. Yes, yes, it must be so; Toulan must die, that Simon may live. Look out for your own self first, and then your neighbors."

With a decided step, Simon left the room and entered the chamber, where Toulan was busy with Jeanne Marie in arranging the furniture.

"I am glad to find you here still," said Simon, nodding to him; "for I had entirely forgotten to tell you that I have a present for you, which will certainly please you, and which I have saved and laid away expressly for you."

"What is it, Simon? What kind of a present have you for me?"

"A very precious one, at least such as you and your like will consider so, I think. I have the long, yellow locks which Jeanne Marie cut yesterday from little Capet's head."

"And will you give them to me?" asked Toulan, eagerly.

"Yes, that will I, and it is for that purpose that I have brought them along. They are lying, with all the letters, in my work-box. But I cannot get at them to-day in all the confusion, for they are at the very bottom of the box. But come to-morrow morning, and you shall receive your costly treasure. If you like, you can come about nine o'clock; and if I should happen to have any thing to do, and not be here, I will give the hair to Jeanne Marie, and she will hand it to you."

"Be sure that I shall come," said Toulan, earnestly. "Give me your hand, and let me thank you for your delicate act of kindness. I certainly did you a wrong, for I did not hold you capable of such a deed. I thank you, Simon, I thank you from my heart; and to-morrow morning, punctually at nine, I shall be here to receive my precious possession. Farewell till then, Simon! I have no quiet now, but must run around and see whether every thing seems as usual in the Temple, and our secret undiscovered." He hastened away, and disappeared around the corner.

The whole day Simon was busy with his own thoughts, and engaged in arranging the furniture, with his mind clearly not on his work. In the afternoon he declared that he must go to the Temple again, because in the upper corridor he had left a chest with some utensils in it which were his.

"It seems to me, husband, you are homesick for the Temple," said Jeanne Marie jestingly, "and you are sad because you are no longer in the old, black walls."

"Yes, I am homesick for the Temple," replied Simon, "and that is why I go there."

But he did not take the way to the Temple, but to the city hall, and rang the bell so violently that the porter dashed to the door to open it.

"It is you, citizen," he ejaculated. "I thought something must have happened."

"Something has happened, and I have come to inform the Committee of Safety," answered Simon, impetuously. "Has it met?"

"Yes, it is in the little council-chamber. You will find an officer at the door, and can let him announce you."

Simon strode forward and found the sentinel before the door, who asked him what his business there was.

"Go in, citizen, and announce that Simon is here, and brings important news, of great peril to the state."

A minute later, Simon was ushered into the hall in which the Safety Committee were assembled. All those stern-faced men of the republic knew Simon as a faithful and zealous republican, upon whose devotion they could reckon, and whose fidelity was immovable.

"I am come," said Simon, slowly, "I am come to bring an accusation against a certain person as a conspirator against the republic, and a traitor to our liberties."

"Who is it, and what has he done?" asked the chairman, with a cold smile.

"What has he done? He means to do something, and I mean to prevent him. He means to release the wolf's whelp from the Temple. Who knows but he may have done so already, for when I left the Temple this morning, my successor had not come, and little Capet was alone. Who is it that is able to release the boy and the two ladies? It is Toulan, the traitor, the royalist Toulan!"

"Toulan!" replied Pétion, with a shrug. "We know very well that Toulan is a traitor, and that the republic can expect only the worst from him that he can do. He was accused once, but escaped merited punishment by flight, and he has unquestionably gone to Coblentz to join the tyrant's brothers there. Our police are watchful, and have discovered not a trace of him."

"Then allow me to put the police on his track," said Simon, laughing. "Be so good as to send a couple of officers to me to-morrow, and I will deliver Toulan, the traitor, into their hands."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TOULAN'S DEATH.

THE next morning, at the stroke of nine, Toulan, in the garb of a commissioner, entered the house of the new collector at the Macon gate. Simon received him at the door, and conducted him into the sitting-room.

"You see," said Toulan, "that I am punctual, and I must tell you that I have been almost too impatient to wait. I hope you do not regret your promise, and that you mean to give me the noble present that you promised me."

"Unfortunately I can not," answered Simon, with a shrug. "My wife insisted on giving you the hair with her own hands, and she has just gone out. You will have to wait for her, if you really are anxious to possess the hair of little Capet."

"Yes, I am anxious to own it," replied Toulan. "The hair of my dear young king will be my most cherished possession, and—"

"Come, come," interrupted Simon, "there you exaggerate. The gold salt's-bottle, which the Austrian gave you, is a great deal dearer to you, is it not? You still have that, have you not?"

"Still have it?" cried Toulan. "I would sooner part with my life than with this remembrancer of Marie Antoinette!"

"Well, then, see which you would rather keep, your life, or the bottle the Austrian gave you," said Simon, with a laugh, as he sprang toward the door and opened it Two officials of the Safety Committee, followed by armed men, entered.

"Have you heard every thing?" asked Simon, triumphantly.

"Yes, we have heard every thing, and we arrest you, Toulan, as a traitor. Take him to the Conciergerie. The authorities will decide what shall be done with him further."

"Well," said Toulan, calmly, "the authorities will, perhaps, do me the honor of letting me go the same way that my king and my queen have taken, and I shall follow the example of the noble sufferers, and die for the hallowed cause of royalty. Let us go, that I may not longer breathe the air which the blasphemer and traitor Simon has poisoned. Woe upon you, Simon! In your dying hour think of me, and of what I say to you now: You are sending me to death, that you may live in peace. But you will find no peace on earth, and if no man accuses you, your conscience will. On your dying bed you will see me before you, and on the day of judgment you will hear my voice, accusing you before the throne of God as a betrayer and murderer. May my blood come on your head, Simon!"

Simon lived to enjoy his freedom and his money only a short time. At the expiration of a year he fell into lunacy, which soon made him attempt his own life. He died in the Asylum of Bicêtre. His wife lived till 1821, in a hospital at Paris, and in her dying hour asserted that little Capet was released in the way above related.

On the next day, there was a great excitement within the Temple, and the Safety Committee repaired thither in a body. The lamplighter, who made his rounds on the evening of the day on which Simon left the Temple, had asserted that the child that lay upon the mattress was not the little Capet. "He must know this," he said, "for he had seen the child daily when he lighted the lamp in the boy's room."

The new keeper, Augustus Lasne, was very much excited at the communication of the lamplighter, and at dawn of the next day repaired to the city hall to report the statement. The Safety Committee resolved on an immediate investigation of the Temple, after pledging one another to the deepest secrecy, and enjoining the same on all the servants at the Temple.

The officials found on the mattress a moaning, feverish boy, in the garments of the dauphin. These they recognized as the ones which the republic had had made a month before for little Capet, but no one could say whether this child, with a body covered with sores, a swollen face, and sunken, lustreless eyes, was really little Capet or not; no one knew whether sickness had so changed his looks that this stupid, idiotic boy was the one whom they had all known when he was well, as they saw him joyously flitting around. First of all they summoned Doctor Naudin, the director of Hôtel Dieu, to examine the boy. He appeared without delay, and declared solemnly and decidedly that this was the same boy whom he had seen there some days before when he visited Simon's wife, only the English sickness which afflicted the child had distorted his limbs, while the cutting off of his hair gave him a changed look, and it was no wonder that the lamplighter failed to recognize him.

Simon, who was summoned to give evidence, asserted the same thing, and affirmed that he recognized little Capet in the sick boy, and that his wife had cut off his hair only the day before. He brought the hair as a complete proof of the identity, and it was seen to agree perfectly with that of the sick child.

Yet some of the officials still doubted, and their doubts were increased when on the same day the servant of Count Frotté reported to the Safety Committee that his master had made a sudden and secret journey, accompanied by a boy, whom the count had treated with great deference.

This boy might be the dauphin, whom Count Frotté, in conjunction with Toulan, might have spirited out of the Temple in some secret way, and who must be followed at all hazards. At the same time the government were informed that the Count de St. Prix had left Paris in company with a boy, and had taken the road to Germany. Chazel, a member of the Convention, was sent secretly to Puy to arrest Frotté and the boy there; and Chauvaine, another member, was ordered to follow the road to Germany, and, if possible, to bring back Count St. Prix.

After a while both of them returned, with nothing accomplished. Chazel had, indeed, arrested Count Frotté and the boy in Puy, but the count had given such undeniable proofs that the boy was not the dauphin—he had summoned so many unimpeachable witnesses from Paris, who recognized the boy as the son of M. de Guerivière, who was in Coblentz with the princes, that nothing more remained but to release the count and his comrade.

Chauvaine had not been able to arrest the Count de St. Prix, and had only learned that in company with a boy he had crossed the Rhine and entered Germany.

It was of no use, therefore, to undertake farther investigations, and the conclusion must be firmly held to that the boy in the Temple, whose sickness increased from day to day, was the real Capet, the son of Louis XVI. The suspicion which had been aroused must be kept a deep secret, that the royalists should not take renewed courage from the possibility that the King of France had been rescued.*

But the secret investigations, and the efforts to draw something from Toulan, caused the authorities to postpone his fate from week to week, from month to month. On the 20th of January he was arrested and taken to the Conciergerie, and not till the month of May did the Convention sentence him to death. The charge was this: that he had accepted presents from the Widow Capet, in particular the gold salt's-bottle, and had made frequent plans to release the Capet family from prison.

On the same day Madame Elizabeth, the sister of Louis XVI., was sentenced to death, on the charge of conducting a correspondence with her brothers, through the agency of Toulan, having for its end the release of the royal family.

When the sentence was read to Madame Elizabeth, she smiled. "I thank my judges that they allow me to go to those I love, and whom I shall find in the presence of God."

Toulan received his sentence with perfect composure. "The one, indivisible, and exalted republic is just as magnanimous, is it not, as the monarchy was in old times, and it will grant a last favor to one who has been condemned to death, will it not?"

"Yes, it will do that, provided it is nothing impossible. It will gladly grant you a last request."

"Well," said Toulan, "then I ask that I may be executed the same day and the same hour as Madame Elizabeth, the sister of the king, and that I may be allowed to remain by her side at her execution."

"Then you have only till to-morrow to live, Citizen Toulan," replied the presiding officer of the court, "for Elizabeth Capet will be executed to-morrow."

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* Later investigations in the archives of Paris have brought to light, among other important papers relative to the flight of the prince, a decree of the National Convention, dated Prairial 26 (June 14), 1794, which gave all the authorities orders "to follow the young Capet in all directions." The boy who remained a prisoner in the Temple, died there June 8, 1798, a complete idiot.

Early the next morning three cars drove away from the Conciergerie. In each of these cars sat eight persons, men and women of the highest aristocracy. They had put on their most brilliant court attire for that day, and arranged themselves as for a holiday. Over the great crinoline the ladies wore the richest silks, adorned with silver and gold lace; they had had their hair dressed and decorated with flowers and ribbons, and carried elegant fans in their hands. The gentlemen wore velvet coats, brilliant with gold and silver, while cuffs of the finest lace encompassed their white hands. Their heads were uncovered, and they carried the little three-cornered hat under the arm, as they had done at court in presence of the royal family.

All the aristocrats imprisoned in cells at the Conciergerie had begged for the high honor of being executed on that day, and every one whose request had been granted, had expressed his thanks for it as for a favor.

"What we celebrate to-day is the last court festival," said the prisoners, as they ascended the cars to be carried to the guillotine. "We have the great good fortune of being present at the last great levée, and we will show ourselves worthy of the honor." All faces were smiling, all eyes beaming, and when the twenty-four condemned persons dismounted from their cars at the foot of the scaffold, one would believe that he saw twenty-four happy people preparing to go to a wedding. No one would have suspected that it was death to whom they were to be united.

There were only two persons in this brilliant and select society who were less elegantly adorned than the others. One was the young girl, with the pale angel face, who sat between the sister of Malesherbes and the wife of the former minister, Montmorin, in a neat white robe, with a simple muslin veil, that surrounded her like a white cloud on which she was floating to heaven. The other was the man who sat behind her, whose firm, defiant countenance gave no token that an hour before he had wept hot, bitter tears as he took leave of his wife and only child. But this was all past, and on that lofty, thoughtful brow not the slightest trace remained of earthly sorrow. The pains of each had been surmounted, and, even in death, Toulan would do honor to the name which that woman had given him—whom he had loved most sacredly on earth—and he would die as Fidèle.

The ladies and gentlemen of this unwontedly solemn company, who were collected here in view of the scaffold, had dismounted from the cars. Above stood the glistening instrument of death, and near it the executioners. They were all left free to decide in what order they would ascend and place the head beneath the axe. The Convention had made the simple order that Madame Elizabeth should be the last but one, and that Toulan should follow her.

Joyous and bright was the countenance of the princess; joyous and bright was the aspect of the improvised court, whose master of ceremonies was Death.

The gentlemen had begged the favor of preceding the ladies upon the scaffold. One after another they ascended the staircase, and in passing by they greeted the princess with the same deep bow that would have been given at court. And Madame Elizabeth thanked them with a smile that was not of this world.

When the heads of the twelve gentlemen had fallen, the bodies laid on one side, and the scaffold cleansed a little from blood, the ladies' turn came. Every one of them asked the favor of embracing Princess Elizabeth, and, with the kiss which she pressed upon their lips, a heavenly joy seemed to spring up in their hearts. With smiles they ascended the scaffold, with smiles they placed their heads beneath the axe.

The last of the ladies, the Marchioness de Crussol d'Amboise, had received the parting kiss and ascended the steps of the guillotine. Only Elizabeth and Toulan now remained at the foot.

"Fidèle," whispered Elizabeth in gentle tones, "I shall soon be with my brother and my sister. Give me your hand, my brother. You shall conduct me to death, and I will give you my hand above, at the opening of the new life, and conduct you to Marie Antoinette. 'Sister,' I will say to her, 'this is the one true and good heart which beat on earth for you, and I bring it to you that you may rejoice in it in heaven.' Toulan, there is only one title of honor for all men, and that is Fidèle. It is sanctioned even by the word of God: 'Be thou *faithful* unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'"

Just at that moment the axe rattled, there was a muffled sound, and the head of the Marchioness Crussol d'Amboise fell into the basket.

"Elizabeth Capet, it is your turn—come up!"

"I come."

She ascended the scaffold. Arrayed, as she was, in this white robe, her transparent face was like that of an angel. It seemed to Toulan as if her foot no longer rested on the earth. He followed her to the scaffold; and as she was about to ascend the steps, he laid his hand upon her arm.

"Princess, I have a secret to impart to you. I have promised with a solemn oath that my lips should disclose it to no mortal; but you, Elizabeth, belong already to the immortals, the peace of God illumines your brow, and I want you to have one last joy before you ascend into heaven. This is my secret: The boy who is confined in the Temple is not the dauphin. I have fulfilled the promise which I gave the queen. I have saved the dauphin, and he is now in Vendée, under the safe care of Prince de Condé."

"Elizabeth Capet, come up, or we must bring you by force."

"I am coming. Farewell, Fidèle! you have spoken the truth; you have given me a last joy! I thank you; now kiss my lips; give your sister a parting kiss, Fidèle. Farewell, my brother!"

He touched the lips that were illumined with a sad smile—"Farewell, my sister!"

She ascended the steps, and, reaching the scaffold, she calmly laid aside the veil, and prepared her toilet for death.

At the foot of the scaffold Toulan remained upon his knees; his great eyes, which had been directed to Elizabeth, beamed with rapture, and in his heart there were words written with a finger of diamond—words hallowed and comforting, that Toulan read in meditation and prayer: "Love vanquishes death; love is victorious even over life; love, which is the highest friendship, and friendship, which is the highest love, rise so far above every thing earthly, that thou must surrender every thing for them, every thing which thou hast valued upon earth, every thing which has stood to thee in the most tender relations. In this love thou hast lived, and in this love thou shalt die and ascend into heaven."

"Toulan, come up! Do you not hear us calling you? Do you not see that Elizabeth Capet has made place for you?"

He had not seen when the noble head of the princess fell into the basket, he had not heard the executioner call him; he had only read in his heart the revelation of love.

He ascended the steps, and his countenance beamed with the same light of rapture which had surrounded Elizabeth's brow.

A piercing scream came from the crowd, as a young wife fell senseless into the arms of her neighbors, while the boy who stood near her extended his hands to the scaffold, and called, loudly, "Father, dear father!"

Toulan did not turn to them. No earthly sorrow had place in this soul, which had overcome pain, and received eternal joy into itself.

Calmly he laid his head beneath the axe. "God is love," he said, aloud. "He that abideth in love, abideth in God, and God—"

The axe descended, and left Toulan's last words unspoken.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WITHOUT NAME AND RANK.

The Prince de Condé was walking with quick steps up and down his apartment. His brow was cloudy, his eyes wore a sad look, and at times he raised his hand, as if he would remove a veil that darkened his sight.

"It must be," he said, decisively, after a while. "Yes, it must be; I see no other means of saving him from the snares of his enemies and friends. He must leave, and that at once."

He walked hastily to the table, pulled the bell violently, and ordered the servant who came in to bring the boy who came yesterday to him.

A few minutes later, the door opened, and a boy of ten or twelve years, with great blue eyes, fair hair, graceful form, and delicate complexion, came into the room. At his appearance the Prince de Condé seemed deeply moved. He hastened with open arms to meet the boy, pressed him closely to his heart, and kissed his fair hair and eyes.

"Welcome, a thousand times welcome!" he said, with trembling voice. "How long have I desired to see this moment, and how happy I am that it has come at last! You are saved, you are restored to freedom, to life, and there is in store for you, I hope, a great and brilliant future!"

"Then I shall have to thank you for it, my cousin," said the boy, with his sweet, resonant voice. "You have released me from the dreadful prison, and I thank you for life. I am glad, too, that I see you at last, for I wanted so much to express my thanks, and every evening I have prayed to God to grant me the happiness of greeting my dear cousin, the Prince de Condé."

The joyous light had long since faded from the face of the prince, and a cloud was gathering on his brow, as, with a timid, searching look, he glanced around, as if he feared that some one besides himself might hear the words of the boy.

"Do not call me your cousin," he said, softly; and even his voice was changed, and became cold and husky.

The boy fixed his great blue eyes with an expression of astonishment on the gloomy countenance of the Prince de Condé.

"You are no longer glad to see me here? Is it disagreeable to you for me to call you my cousin?"

The prince made no answer at once, but walked up and down with great strides, and then stood still before the boy, who had calmly observed his impatient motions.

"Let us sit down," said the Prince de Condé—"let us sit down and talk."

He gave his hand to the boy, led him to the divan, and took his own place upon an easy-chair, directly opposite to the child.

"Let us talk," he repeated. "I should like to know, in the first place, whether you have a good memory, for I have been told that your head has suffered, and that you have no recollection of the past."

A gentle, sad smile played around the lips of the boy.

"I have been silent about the past, as I have been commanded to," he said, "but I have not forgotten it."

"Do you remember your mother?" asked the prince.

The boy trembled convulsively, a glowing red passed over his cheeks, and a deep paleness followed.

"Monsieur," he asked, with a tremulous voice, "would it be possible for me to forget my dear mamma queen?—my mamma queen who loved her little Louis Charles so much? Ah, sir, you would not have asked that if you had known how much pain you give me."

"I beg your pardon," said the prince, embarrassed. "I see you remember. But let me try you once more. Will you tell me what happened to you after being taken away from your cruel foster-parents? What were those people's names, and what were they?"

"My foster-parents, or my tormentors rather, were called Mr. and Mistress Simon. The man had been a cobbler, but afterward he was superintendent and turnkey in the Temple, and when I was taken away from my mamma, sister, and aunt, I had to live with these dreadful people."

"Did you fare badly there?"

"Very badly, sir; I was scolded and ill-treated, and the worst of all was that they wanted to compel me to sing ribald songs about my mamma queen."

"But you did not sing these songs?" asked the Prince de Condé.

The eyes of the boy flamed. "No," he said, proudly, "I did not sing them. They might have beaten me to death. I would rather have died than have done it."

The prince nodded approvingly. "And how did you escape from these people?" he asked.

"You know, Prince de Condé," answered the boy, smiling. "It is you who helped me escape."

"Tell me about this matter a little," said the prince, "and how you have fared since then. I contributed, as you suppose, to your release, but I was not present in person. How did you escape from the Temple?"

"I was put into a basket with soiled clothes, which Mistress Simon was taking away with her from the Temple. This basket she gave to a washerwoman who was waiting for us at the Macon gate. She had a little donkey-cart in readiness there, the basket was put into it, and went on to a village, the name of which I do not know. There we stopped; I was taken out of the basket and carried into a house, where we remained a few hours to rest and change our clothes."

"We? Whom do you mean by we?"

"Me and the supposed washerwoman," replied the boy. "This woman was, however, no other than M. de Jarjayes, whom I knew long ago, and who, with Fidèle—I should say, with Toulan—had thought out and executed the plan of my escape. M. de Jarjayes changed his clothes, as did I also, and after remaining concealed in the house all day, in the evening we took a carriage and rode all night. On the next day we remained concealed in some house, and in the night we continued our journey."

"Did he tell you where you were going?"

"Jarjayes told me that the Prince de Condé was my protector and deliverer, that the magnanimous prince had furnished the necessary money, and that I should remain concealed in one of his palaces till the time should arrive to acknowledge me publicly. Till then, said M. de Jarjayes to me, I was never to speak of the past, nor disclose a single word about any thing that concerned myself or my family. He told me that if I did not follow his instructions literally, I should not only be brought back to Simon, but I should have to bear the blame of causing the death of my sister Therese and my aunt Elizabeth. You can understand, my prince, that after that I was dumb."

"Yes. I understand. Where did M. de Jarjayes carry you?"

"To one of the palaces of the Prince de Condé in loyal and beautiful Vendée. Ah, it was very delightful there, and there were very pleasant people about me. The story was that I was a nephew of the prince, and that on account of impaired health, I was obliged to go into the country and must be tended with great care. I had a preceptor there who gave me instruction, and sometimes the brave General Charette came to the palace on a visit. He was always very polite to me, and showed me all kinds of attention. One day he asked me to walk with him in the park. I did so, of course, and just as we entered a dark allée he fell upon his knees, called me majesty, said he knew very well that I was the King of France, and that the noble and loyal Prince de Condé had rescued me from prison."

"The devil!" muttered the prince to himself, "our dear friends are always our worst enemies."

The boy paid no attention to the words of Condé, and went on: "The general conjured me to confess to him that I was the son of King Louis, and I should follow him, remain with his little army, which would acknowledge me at once, and proclaim me King of France."

"And what did you answer?" asked Condé, eagerly.

"My lord," replied the boy, with proud, grave mien, "I told you that I gave my word to M. de Jarjayes to divulge nothing till you should tell me that the right time had arrived. I could therefore confess nothing to Charette, and told him that he had fallen into a great error, and that I have and can lay claim to no other honor than of being the nephew of the Prince de Condé."

"You said that?" asked Condé, in amazement.

The boy raised his head with a quick movement, and something of the proud and fiery nature of Louis XIV. flashed in his eyes.

"I did not know then," he replied, "that my relationship to the Prince de Condé was not agreeable to him."

The prince looked troubled and perplexed, and dropped his eyes before the piercing gaze of the boy. "Go on, if I may venture to ask you," he said, softly. "What did General Charette do when you repelled him?"

"First he implored, and wept, and conjured me to trust him, and to lay aside my incognito before him, the truest and best of royalists. But as I continued steadfast, and disclosed nothing, he became angry at length, pushed me away from him, threatened me with his fist, swore he would have his revenge on those who had deceived him, and declared that I was no Bourbon, for the son of my fathers would not be so weak and cowardly as to conceal his name and lineage."

"And you kept silent, in spite of this demand?"

"Yes, my lord, I kept silent; and, notwithstanding his pain and grief, I left him in the belief that he had deceived himself, or rather, that he had been deceived."

"Oh!" cried Condé, "it is plain that you have been steeled in the school of suffering, and that the years of misfortune like yours must each be reckoned double, for, in spite of your twelve years, you have acted like a man!"

"My lord," replied the boy, proudly, "the Bourbons attain their majority at fifteen, and at that age they may, according to the law of France, become independent sovereigns. They ought, therefore, to begin to learn young. That was the opinion of Queen Marie Antoinette, who taught me to read in my fifth year. You, my lord, have, in your magnanimity, done every thing to make me able to conform to the laws of my house, if it shall please God that the son of my dear unfortunate father should one day ascend the vacant throne of the Bourbons. During these two years which I have spent in concealment in your palace in Vendée, you have laid a strong and firm foundation, on which the superstructure of my life may rest. I have, thanks to the excellent teachers you have given me, had an opportunity to learn much, and to recall much which I had forgotten during the years before my release from imprisonment."

"Your teachers inform me that your industry was unceasing, and that you learned more in months than some do in years. You are familiar with several languages, and, besides, have been instructed, as I desired, in the art of war and in mathematics."

"In the studies of kings and soldiers," replied the boy, with a proud smile.

"I fear that you will prove not to have prosecuted those studies with a view to their use among soldiers," said Condé, with a sigh. "Your prospects are very dark—yes, darker even than when you left the Temple. These two years have made your condition more perilous. It was fortunate that you could spend them in solitude and secrecy, and be able to finish your education, and it would be a great blessing to you to be able to go on with your quiet studies for some years longer. But your enemies had sought you without rest; they were on your track, and had I left you there any longer, you would have been found some day stabbed or shot in the park. The steward informed me that all kinds of suspicious people had gathered in the neighborhood of the palace and the garden, and I conjecture that they were the emissaries of your enemies. On this I took you away from that place, and have brought you here for your greater safety. Now allow me one question. Do you know who your enemies are?"

"I think I know them," replied Louis Charles, with a sad smile. "My enemies are the self-same men who brought my father and my mother to the scaffold, destroyed the throne, and in its place gave France a red cap. My enemies are the republicans, who now rule in this land, and whose great object must, of course, be to put me out of the way, for my life is their death! France will one day be tired of the red cap, and will restore the throne to him to whom it belongs, so soon as it is certain that he who is entitled to the crown, is living to wear it."

"And who do you suppose is justified in wearing the crown of France?"

"You ask as if you did not know that I am the only son and heir of the murdered King of France."

"The only son, but not the only heir. Your inheritance will be contested; and even if France should transform herself from a republic to a monarchy, every attempt possible will be made to drive you, the son of Louis XVI., from the throne, and put the crown on the head of another."

"Sir, if monarchy is uppermost again, the crown belongs to me. Who, in that case, would venture to contend with me for it?"

"Your enemies! Not those whom you have just named, but the other half of your enemies, of whose existence you have no suspicion, it seems—your enemies, the royalists."

"How so?" cried Louis Charles, in amazement. "Do you call the royalists my enemies?"

"Yes, and they are so, your powerful, defiant, and untiring enemies. Do you not see that even here in this room I do not dare to give you the title that is your due, for fear that the walls may have ears and increase the danger which threatens you? I will now name to you the greatest of your enemies—the Count de Provence."

"How! my uncle, the brother of my father, he my enemy?"

"He is your enemy, as he was the enemy of your mother. Believe me, young man, it is not the people who have made the revolution in France; it is the princes who have done it. The Count de Provence, the Count d'Artois, and the Duke d'Orleans—they are the chief revolutionists; they it is who have put fire to the throne; they it is who have sown the libels and lampoons broadcast over France, and made the name of Marie Antoinette odious. They did it out of hate, out of revenge, and out of ambition. Queen Marie Antoinette had won her husband over to the policy of Austria, and in this way had set herself in opposition to the Count de Provence, and the whole royal family. The count never forgave her for this, and he will never forgive you for being the son of your mother. The Count de Provence, as he now styles himself, is your sworn enemy, and will do all he can to bring you to ruin; he is ambitious, and his goal is, to be the King of France!"

"King of France? The Count de Provence, the brother of the king, wants to be his successor, when I, the son of the king, am alive and demand my inheritance?"

"Your demand will not be acknowledged: they will declare that you are an impostor and a deceiver. Ah, the Count de Provence is a selfish and a hard character. He means to make his own way, and if you put hinderances in it, he will put you out of his path, without compassion and without remorse; trust me for knowing this, who for three years have been in the immediate neighborhood of the prince. I was afraid to impart the plan of your escape to the princes, and, after you were released, I was silent, for a secret is only safe when a very few are conscious of it. But after the news came last year from Paris, that the boy who had been placed as your substitute in the Temple had died, after a long sickness, I ventured to inform the Count de Lille about the real facts. I told him that I believed that information I had received might be relied upon, that King Louis XVII. had been released from the Temple by true and devoted servants, and was then in a place of safety. Would you like to know what reply the count made?"

"I pray you, tell me," responded Louis Charles, with a sigh.

"He answered me, 'I advise you, cousin, not to put any confidence in such idle stories, and not to be duped by any sly rogues. My unfortunate little nephew died in the Temple—that is a fact acknowledged by the republic, universally believed, and denied by no one. After long sufferings the son has fallen as a new victim to the bloodthirsty republicans, and we are still wearing mourning for our deceased nephew, King Louis XVII.. And should any wisehead happen on the thought of making the dead boy come to life again, I will be the first to disown him and hold him as an impostor.' Those were the words of the count, and you will now confess that I am right in calling him your enemy, and in not daring to communicate to him the secret of your release?"

"I grant you," replied the prince, sadly, "I would rather bury the secret forever."

"Now, hear me further. A few weeks ago the prince summoned me, and I saw on his sinister face and in his flashing eyes that he must have received some unwelcome tidings. He did not make me wait long for the confirmation of my conjectures. With a sharp, cutting voice he asked me what kind of a nephew of mine that was whom I was educating at my palace in Vendée. General de Charette had given him information through one of his emissaries sending him word that the report was current in Vendée that this alleged nephew of mine was the rescued King Louis XVII., whom I had helped release from the Temple. He, General Charette, had believed it at first. He had therefore (so the prince went on to say) visited my palace recently, for the purpose of discovering the supposed young king. There he convinced himself that the boy bore no resemblance to the little Louis Charles—whom he had once seen at the Tuileries—and that he certainly was not the son of Louis XVI."

"He told me only too truly that he would have his revenge," whispered the young prince.

"He has kept his oath, for he has loudly and publicly declared his belief that Louis XVII. died in the Temple, and he has therefore administered to his army an oath in favor of King Louis XVIII.—that is, the Count de Provence. The count himself informed me of this, and then added, threateningly, 'I advise, you, cousin, either to acknowledge your young nephew, and treat him openly, or else put him out of the way. I advise you further, not to let yourself be imposed upon by adventurers and impostors. It is known that you were among the most active adherents of Queen Marie Antoinette, and there may be people who would work on your credulity and make you believe that the poor little Louis Charles was really released from the Temple. Do not deny that you parted with much money at that time, and believed that it was wanted for the purpose of setting the young King of France free. It was a trap, set in view of your loyalty and devotion, and you fell into it. But you gave your money to no effect, the poor, pitiable king could not be saved, and died in the Temple as a prisoner of the republic. Take care how you trust any idle stories, for, I tell you, you would never bring me to put confidence in them. I am now the rightful King of France—I am Louis XVIII.—and I am resolved not only to declare every pretender who claims to be Louis XVII. an impostor, but to bring him to punishment as a traitor. Mark this well, and therefore warn this mysterious nephew of yours not to venture on playing out his comedy, for it will assuredly change into tragedy, and end with his death.' These were the words of the Count de Lille, and now you understand why I have brought you so suddenly, and so secretly, away from my solitary palace and have you here."

"I understand every thing," said Louis Charles, with a sigh; "I understand, that it would have been better if you had never released me, and I had died like my father and mother."

"We must postpone the accomplishment of our hopes," said Condé, sadly, "for I confess to you, there is little to expect from the present, and there is no place where you are safe from the persecutions and the daggers of your enemies. The republicans desire your death as much as the royalists. In France, two parties threaten you, and would I now risk every thing, carry you to some European court and acquaint the sovereign of your arrival, and ask for his assistance, I should have no credence, for, not the French republic alone, but the Count de Lille would protest against it, and disavow you before all Europe. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary, in order to secure you against your enemies, that you should disappear for a season, and that we patiently await the time which shall permit us to bring you back upon the scenes."

"Do you believe that time will ever come?" asked the little prince, with a shake of the head.

"I believe it, and, above every thing, I hope it," replied Condé, quickly. "The greatest difficulty is to find a place for you to remain where you may not be suspected, and where you may be safe from assault. To my great regret I cannot entertain you here, for my family are too well known for me to suddenly acknowledge a legitimate nephew of your age, and the Count de Lille would be the last to believe it. I confess that it has cost me a great deal of disquiet and anxious thought to find a secure asylum for you."

"And do you think you have found one at last?" asked Louis Charles, indifferently.

"Yes, I believe so, or rather, I know that I have found one. You must be taken to a place which no one can suspect as that where you would be likely to be."

"And what place is this?"

"It is called Mayence."

The boy, who had sat with downcast eyes, perhaps in order not to let some tears be seen, looked quickly up, and the greatest astonishment was depicted in his expressive features.

"Mayence?" he asked. "Is not that a fortress on the Rhine which the troops of the French republic have taken possession of?"

"Yes; and the commandant of Mayence, the head of the troops, is General Kleber, one of the bravest and noblest soldiers of the French republic."

"And you, you want to send me to this General Kleber? Ah, my prince, that would be thrusting me, for the purpose of rescuing me from persecution, into the very crater of the volcano."

"It is not so bad as you suppose, my young friend. General Kleber is at heart a good and true royalist, and although he serves the republic, he does so because he is first of all a soldier, a soldier of his country, and because his country now has pressing need of soldiers to defend the honor and glory of France. I have sent a trustworthy man to General Kleber to impart this secret to him, and to ask him for protection, and a place of refuge for you. General Kleber is ready to grant both, and he has sent his adjutant to Coblentz to escort his nephew to Mayence. You are that nephew, and if you give your consent, you will set out at once and go to Mayence."

"And if I do not give my consent?" asked Louis Charles, with a proud, flashing look.

"I confess," said Condé, with a shrug—"I confess that I am not prepared for that contingency, and cannot on the instant grasp all the unfortunate results which would ensue on your refusal."

"Be calmed, Condé, I do not refuse. I have only this one thing to care for, to cause no danger, and bring nothing disagreeable to you, for I see that they are in store for you if I do not disappear again from view. The son of the king vanished from sight, to appear as the nephew of Condé; and now the nephew of Condé is to vanish, to emerge as the nephew of General Kleber. Ah, who knows but I may yet be the nephew of Simon the cobbler, preparatory to my last appearance on the guillotine?"

"I hope, on the contrary, that on the day when France shall rise again, you will rise too, the acknowledged son of Louis XVI., and the heir of the throne of France. At present the republic has sway, and there is no hope of an immediate change. But that will not last always; and in the decisive hour, when the monarchy and the republic come to their last great battle for existence—at that hour you must appear upon the field, must lift the lilies high in the air, and summon the royalists to your side in the name of God, and of the king your father."

"And what if my uncle, the Count de Provence, then declares me to be an impostor?"

"Then you must publicly and solemnly appeal to France, lay the proofs of your lineage before the nation, summon unimpeachable witnesses, and demand your throne of the French nation. And believe me, if the heart of France is compelled to choose between you and the Count de Provence, it will not choose him, for the count has never possessed the heart of the people, and God is just."

"God is just," replied Louis Charles, sadly—"God is just, and yet the King and Queen of France have perished on the guillotine, and their brother calls himself King of France, while the son of Louis XVI. must find shelter with a general of that French republic which was the enemy of my parents."

"It is true," said Condé, with a sigh, "it is very difficult at times to see the justice of God, but we must always hope to see it, and at length it will reveal itself in all its glory. And the hour of judgment will come for you. Await it steadfastly and with patience, and when it is come, call on me, and I will not neglect your summons, but will support you, and will give you my recognition. I have all the documents which relate to your flight, all the testimony given by those who were engaged in assisting you, and besides this, a detailed account of your flight, subscribed with my name, and stamped with my seal. I have further the testimony of the teachers who gave you instruction at my palace of Chambord, and the keeper of the palace recorded the day on which you arrived. I am ready to give you these papers, if you will swear to me that you will not misuse them, but give them to General Kleber, that he may preserve them for you."

"I swear to you that I will do so," said the prince, solemnly.

Condé handed to him a small and closely-rolled package of papers. "This contains your future," he said, "and out of these papers I hope a crown will grow for you. Till then let the republic preserve them for you. General Kleber is expecting you, and his adjutant is waiting for you in the next room. Permit me to give you one more piece of advice: remain steadfast, resist all tempters who would beguile you with pleasant words to acknowledge yourself King of France. For be persuaded these tempters are the emissaries of your enemies, and if you should acknowledge to them that you are King Louis XVII., you would be writing your own death-warrant. The balls which I trust will spare the nephew of General Kleber would certainly pierce the heart of the nephew of Count de Lille. Continue to deny it as you denied it to General Charette. Swear to me that you will faithfully keep the secret of your lineage till I release you from the oath by which I now close your lips, and tell you that the hour of action and of disclosures is come; swear it to me, in view of the fidelity which I have shown to you, and which I shall always be ready to show."

"You have saved my life," said Louis Charles, solemnly. "My life, therefore, belongs to you, and I give it into your hands in swearing, by the memory of my dear parents, and especially my noble and proud-spirited mother, Queen Marie Antoinette, that I will faithfully and truly keep the secret of my parentage, and not feel myself justified in revealing it to the world, till you, the Prince de Condé, shall have given me permission, and empowered me to do so."

"I thank you," said Condé, "for I am now unconcerned about your immediate future. General Kleber and the French republic will protect you, for the present, from the dangerous pretender, Count Lille, and, in God's providence, I trust there will come a day when France will be prepared to raise the son of its kings to the throne which belongs to him. Let us hope for this day, and be persuaded that I shall neglect nothing which will help bring it about. And now, as we part, I bow my knee to you, my young king; I now acknowledge you solemnly as the son of my well-beloved cousin, King Louis XVI., and the rightful heir of the throne of the lilies. May the spirits of the murdered royal couple, may God and the ear of my king take note of the oath which I now pronounce. I swear that I will never acknowledge any other prince as King of France, so long as you, King Louis XVII., are among the living. I swear that if I ever break this vow, and acknowledge another King of France, you, Louis XVII., may accuse me of high-treason, and condemn me to the death which a traitor deserves. I swear that I will subject myself to this death-penalty without opposition and complaint. And this I swear by Almighty God, and by the memory of your royal parents, whose spirits are with us at this hour."

"And I, Prince de Condé, I accept your oath," said Louis Charles, gravely. "I go away now into exile, but I carry your oath with me as my hope for the future, and may God grant that I shall never be compelled to remind you of it, but that you will faithfully and truly keep it. Fare you well! My crown rests in your heart."

"And in these papers, sire. Deliver them to the brave General Kleber, and he will preserve them as his most sacred and cherished possession."

He kissed the hand of the prince, which was reached out for the papers, and then hastened to summon the officer, who was waiting in the adjoining room for the nephew of General Kleber, having no suspicion what an important mission was intrusted to him.

But General Kleber knew the secret better, and although not a word and not an action disclosed it, yet the gentle friendliness, the mild look, the subdued smile with which the general received his young nephew in Mayence, testified that he was familiar with the secret, and knew how to guard it.

In Mayence, under the care of General Kleber, his nephew, Louis, as he called him, remained during the subsequent time, and very soon gained the heart of his uncle, and was his inseparable friend by day and by night. They slept in one room, they ate at one table. The nephew accompanied his uncle at all parades and military exercises; and, in order to make his favorite a skilful soldier, the general undertook the duties of teacher, gave him instruction in the art of war, and taught him the more familiar duties of a soldier's life. The nephew comprehended readily, and pursued zealously the studies which his uncle assigned him. The pains and sorrows of the past were forgotten, and only the recollections of his happy childhood rested silently at the bottom of his heart like pearls at the bottom of the sea.

"When shall I arise from this estate? When will the crown of the future be linked with these pleasant recollections of the past?" These were the questions which the growing boy repeated to himself every morning and every evening. But his lips never uttered them; he never gave the slightest indication that he was any thing else than the nephew of General Kleber. The French garrison of Mayence considered him to be so, and no one thought of asking whether he bore any other name. It sufficed that he was the nephew of the noble, valiant, and heroic General Kleber. That was the name and rank of the little prince.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE BARON DE RICHEMONT.

THUS passed weeks, months, and even years, and on the gloomy horizon of France arose a new constellation, and from the blood-spotted, corpse-strewn soil of the French republic sprang an armed warrior—a solitary one!—but one to whom millions were soon to bow, and who, like the divinity of battles, was to control the destinies of nations and of princes. This one solitary man was General Bonaparte, the same young man who in the first bloody days of the French Revolution beheld the storm at the Tuileries, and expressed his regret to his companion—the actor Talma—that the king did not command his soldiers to mow down the *canaille* with grape-shot. The young lieutenant of that day, who had been the friend of the actor, dividing his loaf and his dinner with him, had now become General Bonaparte. And this general was serving the same people which as a lieutenant he had wanted to mow down with grape-shot. At the siege of Toulon, in the close contests with the allies against the republic and in the Italian campaign of 1794, Bonaparte had so distinguished himself that the eyes of the French government were already directed to him, and no one could be surprised at the action of General Beauharnais' widow, the fair Josephine, in giving her hand to the young and extraordinary man. This marriage had not only brought happiness to Bonaparte, but it satisfied his ambition. Josephine was the friend of Barras and Tallien, the chief magistrates of the republic at that time, and through her influence the young Bonaparte was sent to Italy to assume the chief command of the French army there. A general of twenty-six years to have the direction of an army, whose four corps were commanded by Generals Massena, Augereau, Serrurier, and La Harpe! The father of Junot, the late Duke de Abrantes, wrote at that time to his son, who was with the French army in Italy: "Who is this General Bonaparte? Where has he served? Does anybody know any thing about him?" And Junot, who was then the faithful friend and the admirer of Bonaparte, replied to his father: "You ask me who General Bonaparte is. I might answer, in order to know who he is, you must be he. I can only say to you that, so far as I am able to judge him, he is one of those men with whom Nature groans, and only brings forth in a century."

Had Junot not replied to his father, the deeds of the young general would soon have done so. Presently, in all France, in all Italy, yes, in all Europe, there was not a man who could ask, "Who is General Bonaparte?" His name was in every mouth, and the soldiers adored the man who had stood victoriously at their head at Lodi and Milan, and borne the banner forward amid the murderous shower of balls at the bridge of Arcoli. Diplomatists and statesmen wondered at him who had taken Venice, and compelled proud and hated Austria to make peace with the French republic, which had brought Marie Antoinette to the scaffold. The republicans and the Directory of the republic feared Bonaparte, because they recognized an enemy of the republic in him, and dreaded his growing power and increasing renown.

On this account General Bonaparte was recalled from the Italian army after peace had been made with Austria, and he returned to Paris. Still he was so feared that the Directory of the republic, in order to remove him, and at the same time to give occupation to his active spirit and his splendid abilities, proposed to Bonaparte to go with an army to Egypt, and extend the glory of France to the distant East.

Bonaparte entered with all his fiery nature into this idea which Barras and Talleyrand had sought to inveigle him into, and all his time, his thoughts, and his energies were directed to the one purpose, to fit himself out with every thing that should be needful to bring to a victorious end a long and stubborn war in a foreign land. A strong fleet was collected, and Bonaparte, as the commander of the many thousands who were to go to Egypt under him, called to his aid the most skilful, valiant, and renowned generals of the French army.

It could not fail that one of the first and most eminent of these was General Kleber, and, of course, his young adjutant and nephew Louis accompanied him.

On the 19th of April, 1798, the French fleet left the harbor of Toulon, and sailed toward the East, for, as Bonaparte said, "Only in the Orient are great realms and great deeds—in the Orient, where six hundred millions of men live."

But these six hundred millions have no army such as the French is, no commander like Bonaparte, no generals like Murat, Junot, Desaix, and, above all, Kleber.

Kleber was the second in command. He shared his perils, he shared his victories, and with him was united his nephew Louis, a youth of fourteen years, who, from his tall, slim figure, his gravity, and his ready understanding, would have passed at least for a youth of eighteen. and who, trained in the school of misfortune, belonged to those early-matured natures which destiny has steeled, that they may courageously contend with and gain the victory over destruction.

It was on the morning of the 2d of July. The French army had disembarked, and stood not far from Alexandria, on the ancient sacred soil of Egypt. Whatever was done must be done quickly, for Nelson was approaching with a fleet, prepared to contend with the French for the possession of Alexandria. Should the city not be taken before the arrival of the English fleet, the victory would be doubtful. Bonaparte knew this well. "Fortune gives us three days' time at the most," cried he, "and if we do not use them we are lost!"

But he did use them! With fearful rapidity the disembarkation of the troops was effected; with fearful rapidity the French army arranged itself on Egyptian soil in three divisions, under Morand, Bon, and Kleber. Above them all was he whose head had conceived the gigantic undertaking, he whose heroic spirit comprehended the whole. This was Bonaparte.

After inspecting all the army and issuing his orders, he rode up the hill in company with his staff to the pillar of Pompey, in order to observe from that point the course of events. The army was advancing impetuously, and soon the city built by Alexander the Great must open its gates to his successor, Bonaparte the Great.

After a short respite, the army advanced farther into the land of the pyramids. "Remember," cried Bonaparte to his soldiers, pointing to those monuments—"remember that forty centuries look down upon you."

And the pyramids of the great plain of Cairo beheld the glorious deeds and victories of the French army, beheld the overthrow of the Egyptian host. The Nile murmured with its blood-red waves the death-song of the brave Mamelukes, and the "forty centuries" which looked down from the pyramids were obliterated by the glorious victories that Bonaparte gained at the foot of those sacred monuments.

A new epoch was to begin. The old epoch was buried for Egypt, and out of the ruins of past centuries a new Egypt was to be born, an Egypt which was to serve France and be tributary to it as a vassal.

This was Bonaparte's plan, and he did every thing to bring it to completion. He passed from battle to battle, from victory to victory, and after conquering Egypt and taking up his residence in Cairo, he at once began to organize the newly-won country, and to introduce to the idle and listless East the culture of the earnest and progressive West. But Egypt would not accept the treasures of culture at the hand of its conqueror. It rose again and again in rebellion against the power that held it down, and hurled its flaming torches of revenge against the hated enemy. A token of this may be seen in the dreadful revolt at Cairo, which began in the night of the 20th of October, and, after days of violence, ended with the cruel cutting down of six thousand Mamelukes. A proof of it may be seen in the constantly renewed attacks of swarms of Bedouins and Mamelukes on the French army. These hordes advanced even to the gates of Cairo, and terrified the population, which had at last taken refuge beneath the foot of the conqueror. But Bonaparte succeeded in subjugating the hostile Bedouin tribes, as he had already subjugated the population of the cities. He sent one of his adjutants, General Croisier, with a corps of brave soldiers, into the desert to meet the emir of the hostile tribes, and Croisier won respect for the commands of his general. He succeeded in taking captive the whole body. A fearful sentence was inflicted on them. Before the eyes of their wives, their children, and their mothers, all the men of the tribe, more than five hundred in number, were killed and their heads put into sacks. The howling and weeping women and children were driven to Cairo. Many perished of hunger on the road, or died beneath the sabre-blows of their enemies; but more than a thousand succeeded in reaching Cairo. They were obliged to encamp upon the great square El Bekir, in the heart of Cairo, till the donkeys arrived which bore the dreadful spoils of victory in blood-dripping bags upon their backs. The whole population of Cairo was summoned to this gigantic square, and was obliged to look on while the sacks were opened and the bloody heads rolled out upon the sacred soil of Egypt.

After this time quiet reigned for a season. Horror had brought the conquered into subjection, and Bonaparte could continue his victorious course. He withdrew to Syria, taking with him Kleber and Kleber's young adjutant, the little Louis. He saw the horrors of war; he was there, the son of the Kings of France, when the army of the republic conquered the cities El Arish and Gaza; he took part by the side of Kleber in the storming of Jaffa. He was there when the captured Jaffa had to open its gates to the victors. He was there when, in the great caravansary, four thousand Turkish soldiers grounded their arms and surrendered themselves as prisoners, after receiving the promise that their lives should be spared. He was there, too, the son of Marie Antoinette, when the unfortunates were driven down to the sea-coast and shot, in order that their enemies might be rid of them. He was there, the son of Louis XVI., when Bonaparte visited the pest-house in Jaffa; he walked through the sick-rooms at the side of his uncle Kleber, who noticed how the face of the young man, which had so often been calm in meeting death on the battle-field or in the storm of assault, now quivered, and the paleness of death swept over his cheeks.

"What was the matter, my son?" asked Kleber, as he returned home from this celebrated visit to the pest-house. "Why did you turn pale all at once, Louis?"

"General," responded Louis, perplexed, "I know not how to answer."

"You ought not to have gone with me to the hospital," said Kleber, shaking his head. "You know I did not want you to go at first; but you insisted on it, and begged and implored so long that at last I had to yield and let you accompany us. But, I confess it myself, it was a dreadful sight, these sick people with their swollen bodies covered with blood and running sores. I understand now why you trembled and turned pale—you were afraid of this dreadful sickness?"

"No, general," answered Louis, softly—"no, I have no fear. Did you not notice that I sprang forward and assisted General Bonaparte, when he lifted up the poor sick man who lay on the floor before the door, and that I helped carry him into the room?"

"I saw it, Louis, and I was much pleased with your courage, and was therefore surprised afterward when you turned pale and trembled, and I saw tears in your eyes. What agitated you all at once so much?"

The young man slowly raised his head and looked at Kleber with his great blue eyes. "General," he said, softly, "I myself do not know what agitated me so much. We were both standing before the bed of a sick man, to whom I handed a pitcher of water which he begged for earnestly. He fixed his great eyes upon me, and his quivering lips murmured: 'God bless you! all saints and angels protect you!' As he spoke these words, there resounded in my heart the echo of a time long since past. It seemed to me as if suddenly a dark curtain parted, and I looked as in a dream at a wondrous, brilliant spectacle. I saw a beautiful and dignified woman of princely figure, of noble, majestic nature. With her I saw two children, a girl and a boy, whom she led by the hand, and with whom she walked through a long hall which was filled with rows of beds. And as she walked there, it seemed as if the sun lightened up the dismal hall, and illumined the pale faces of the sick ones. They raised themselves up in their beds and extended their thin, emaciated hands to the tall lady, and thanked her with earnest blessings for her visit and her comforting words. There was only one of the patients who did not rise, but lay stiff upon his bed and moaned and sighed and whispered unintelligible words, which no one heeded, because the attention of all was fixed upon the great visitor. But the boy who was walking by the side of the tall lady had understood the sobs of the sick one. He left his mother, took the jug which stood upon a table between two beds, filled a glass with water from it, and held it to the dry, quivering lips of the sick one. He drank greedily, and then fixed his eyes upon the boy and lisped the words: 'God bless you! all saints and angels protect you!' And all the people repeated aloud: 'God bless you, all saints and angels protect you!' The dignified lady stooped with a heavenly smile to her son, pressed a tender kiss upon his golden locks, and repeated the same words aloud. This, general, was the fantasy which suddenly appeared before my eyes when the patient spoke those words to-day. It seemed to me as if I perceived all at once a long-silent song of home. I heard the wonderful voice of the exalted lady who spoke those words. It seemed to me as if I felt the kiss which she then imprinted on the head of the five-year-old boy, felt it to my inmost heart, and it glowed there with the fire of an undying love, and shook my whole being, and filled my eyes with tears. You will not chide me for that, general, for those were the lips of my mother who pressed that kiss of blessing on her unhappy son."

He ceased, tears choked his utterance, and, as if ashamed of his deep emotion, he hid his face in his hands.

General Kleber turned away too, and put his hand over his eyes, as though a film had come over them. Then, after a long pause he gently laid his hand upon the shoulder of the young man, who was still sitting with covered face.

"Such memories are holy," he said, "and I honor them, my dear, faithful son. May the blessing which then fell from the lips of a woman whom I too knew and honored, but whose name may never be spoken between us, may it be fulfilled to you! May angels and saints protect you when men shall no longer have the power, and when fate shall separate you from those who have devoted their love and fidelity to you!"

The youth let his hands fall from his face, and looked at the general with a startled, searching glance.

"What do you mean, uncle? You do not mean to say that—"

"That we must part? Yes, my dear nephew, that is what I must say," interrupted Kleber, sadly. "This word has long been burning in my soul, and it is necessary that I speak it. Yes, we must part, Louis."

"Why, oh why?" asked Louis, bitterly. "Why will you too drive me away? You, the only one who loves me a little!"

"Exactly because I love you—exactly for that reason must I separate myself from you. Since we came to Egypt you have been sickly, your cheeks have become pale. The fulness of your limbs has gone, and the dry and hard cough that troubles you every morning has long made me anxious, as you know. On that account, after all the appliances of my physician failed, I applied, as you know, to the physician of the commanding general, to Corvisart, and he has subjected you to a thorough examination."

"It is true," said Louis, thoughtfully, "he has investigated me with the carefulness of a merchant who is about to buy a slave and means to test him. He made a hearing-trumpet of his ear and laid it on my breast, and listened while I had to breathe as if I were a volcano. He put his ear to my heart, he told me that his father had been physician at the French court, and that the murdered queen had a great deal of confidence in him, and then he wondered that my heart beat so violently while he told me this."

"And the result of all these investigations is, that you must return to Europe, Louis," said Kleber, sadly. "Corvisart had declared it an unavoidable necessity for your constitution, and the command of the physician must be obeyed as if it were the command of God. You cannot endure the climate of Egypt, so says Corvisart, and if your life is not to be shortened and you to be made a perpetual invalid, you must return to Europe as quickly as possible, for only there will you recover and grow strong. You see therefore, Louis, that I must separate from you, although it is a sore thing for me to do, for I love you as my own son, and I have no one in the world who is nearly related to me."

"And I, whom else have I in the world?" asked Louis, bitterly. "Who has interest in me excepting you? Ah, general, do not drive me from you. Believe me, it is better for me if for a few short and happy years I live at your side, and then breathe my last sigh in your faithful and tender arms, than if I have to wander solitary and friendless through the strange, cold world, where no one loves me, and where I shall always be surrounded by enemies, or by those who are indifferent. It may be that my body will gain health and strength in the air of Europe, but my heart will always be sick there, for it will lose its home when it shall have lost you, my fatherly friend."

General Kleber slowly shook his head. "In youth one sorrows and forgets it quickly."

"General, do you say that to me, after seeing me weep in the hospital because the word of a dying man called back the recollection of my earliest childhood? Oh, believe me, my heart forgets its sorrows never, and if I must return to France, to Paris, it will seem to me as if I had always to be climbing the hill of Calvary with bloody feet to reach the top where I might perish on the cross. For, believe me, general, my whole life will be nothing but such a wandering through scenes of pain if you drive me from the refuge that your love has offered me. Leave me here, let me live in secrecy and silence beneath the pinions of your love, and do not believe what the physicians tell you. Man's life lies in the hands of God, and if He will sustain it, it is as safe in the deserts of Egypt as in Paris, the capital of the world."

"Because God will sustain your life, Louis, for that very reason, He instructs me, through the voice of the physician, what my duty is, bids me conquer my own grief, and send the son of my heart to his distant home. No, Louis, it is a decided thing, we must part; you must return to France."

"And if it is true," asked Louis, bitterly, "if I am then really to return to France, why must we part? Why must I return without you? Why, if you really love me, do you not accompany me? I heard you say yesterday that several ships, with a part of our troops, were to return to France. Why, then, can you not go back with me?"

"Why?" asked Kleber, sadly. "I will tell you, Louis: because Bonaparte will not allow it. Listen, my son, I will communicate a secret to you: there has news come within the last few days, the first that we have received for ten months. The newspapers which have arrived bring very unwelcome intelligence; they inform us that all the advantages gained in Italy by the French army have been lost—that France is arrayed against Austria, Spain, and all the European powers—that the French Government is threatened by internal factions, which threaten to bring back the reign of terror. I watched Bonaparte's face as he read these papers, and I saw there what he was resolved to do. He will, as soon as he shall gain one more great victory, leave Egypt and return to France."

"He will not return without you, the faithfulest and boldest of his generals. You know well that you are called the right-hand man of Bonaparte."

"Bonaparte means to show the world that he is not only the head, but the right arm too, the heart, the foot, the soul of the French army! And because he means to show this, he will return alone to France; only a few of his faithful subordinates will accompany him; the men who might even oppose him, and put hinderances in the path of his growing ambition, will remain here. *Now* do you believe that Bonaparte will select me to accompany him?"

The young man let his head fall slowly on his breast. "No," he said, softly, "no, I do not believe he will."

"And I know he will not," replied Kleber. "I shall remain here in Egypt, and die here! Hush! Do not contradict me; there are presentiments which do not mislead us, and which God sends to us, that we may shape our course by them, and set our house in order. My house is set in order—my will is made; I have given it to Bonaparte, and he has solemnly sworn to carry it into execution in all respects. Only one care is left me—to provide for your immediate future, and to arrange that you may reach France."

"You adhere to this?" asked Louis, sadly.

"Yes, I abide by this; you must not run away from your own future, and this will, I trust, be a brilliant one. All tokens indicate that France is wearied with the republic, and that it is perhaps nearly ready to restore the throne of the Lilies. Young man, shall this reëstablished throne fall into the hands of that man who contributed so much to its downfall—who was the calumniator, the secret enemy of Queen Marie Antoinette? Would you consent that the Count de Provence should be King of France?"

"No, never!" cried Louis, with blazing eyes and flaming face. "That never can be; for, before the brother of Louis XVI. can ascend the throne as Louis XVIII., his rightful predecessor, Louis XVII., must have died."

"He has died, and the French government has placed in its archives the certificate of the death of Louis Charles Capet, signed by the physicians and the servants of the Temple. My son, in order to prevent the Count de Provence acknowledging this certificate as genuine, you must be prepared to place before him and the world other testimonials that Louis XVII. is not dead. This is a sacred offering which you must make to the manes of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette, even if the stake were not a throne and a crown!"

"You are right," cried Louis, with enthusiasm, "my whole life shall be devoted to this sacred trust; it shall have no other aim than this: to avenge Marie Antoinette of the most cruel of her enemies, the Count de Provence, and to place the son, whom, after the death of her husband, she acknowledged as King of France, on the throne which really belongs to him, and not to the Count de Provence! You are right, general, I must return to Europe; I must carry to France the papers which show that Louis XVII. did not die in the Temple, but was released. I am ready to go, and to endure the pain of parting from you."

"May God grant that we may both be compensated for this pain!" replied Kleber, embracing the young man tenderly. "There remain to us a few weeks to be together. Let us use them so that they shall afford us many cheerful recollections. Bonaparte will not leave Egypt before adding one more glory to his reputation. He does not mean to return to France as the conquered, but as the conqueror!"

General Kleber was right. He knew Bonaparte sufficiently well to be able to read his countenance; he understood the dumb speech of the Cæsar of the age.

Bonaparte wanted to gain one great battle, in order to return to Europe with glory. He gained it at Aboukir, winning the day in a contest with the united Turks and English—one of the most signal victories that he had ever won. Eight thousand prisoners were taken on that 21st of July, 1799. Four thousand lay dead upon the battlefield, and as many were sunk in the captured and destroyed ships of the English. On the day after the battle the foam of the waves was tipped with blood along the shore.

Bonaparte himself conducted the whole battle, and personally gained the victory. At the moment when the contest seemed doubtful, he assumed command of a cavalry regiment, advanced upon the Turkish pacha, and by his heroic courage kindled all the army afresh. Even General Kleber could not disguise his admiration of the hero of Aboukir; and when, at the close of the battle, he met Bonaparte on the field, he embraced him with passionate tenderness. "General," he cried, with enthusiasm, "you are as great as the world; but the world is not great enough for you!" *

The victory that Bonaparte desired was thus won, and he could return with honor to France. He made secret preparations for his journey thither, fitting up two ships, which were to carry him and his companions. The army was to hear of his departure only after he had gone; but, much as he desired to keep the thing secret, there were some who had to know of it, and among them, happily, was General Kleber. Bonaparte had chosen him as his successor, and therefore he must be informed respecting the condition of affairs before the head of the army should withdraw. On the same day when this communication took place, Kleber repaired to General Desaix, who was his intimate friend, and from whom he learned that he was to be one of Bonaparte's companions on the return. The two generals had a prolonged secret interview, and at the close of it they both went to Kleber's house, and entered the room of his adjutant Louis. General Desaix bowed with great deference to the young man, who, blushing at the honor which so distinguished a general paid him, extended his hand to him. Desaix pressed a kiss upon it, and from his eyes, unused to tears, there fell a drop upon the young man's hand.

"General," cried Louis, in amazement, "what are you doing?"

"I am paying my homage to misfortune and to the past," said Desaix, solemnly, "and the tear which I drop on your hand is the seal of my fidelity and silence in the future. Young man, I swear to you that I will cherish your secret in my heart as a hallowed treasure, and will defend with

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* Denon, Mémoires, vol. i., p. 349.

my life's blood the papers which your uncle, General Kleber, has intrusted to my care this day. I am a soldier of the republic, I have pledged my fidelity to her, and must and shall keep it. I cannot become a partisan; but I shall always be the protector of misfortune, and a helper in time of need. Trust me in this, and accept me as your friend."

"I do accept you, general," said Louis, gently, "and if I do not promise to love you just as tenderly as I love my uncle, General Kleber, who has been to me father, brother, and protector, and to whom I owe every thing, yet, I can assure you, that, after him, there is no one whom I will love as I shall you, and there is no one in Europe who can contend with you for my love. I am very poor in friends, and yet I feel that my heart is rich in love that no one desires now."

"Preserve that possession well, my son," said Kleber, as he took leave of his son, and laid his hand on the head of the young man. "Preserve your heart tender and loving, for if Fate is just, it may one day be for the advantage of a whole nation that you are so, and the heart of the man be the mediator between the people and its king! Farewell, my son; we see each other to-day for the last time, for in this very hour you will go to your ship with Desaix. It may be that the ships will sail this very night, and if so, well! A quick and unlooked-for separation mitigates the pains of parting. You will soon have overcome them, and when you reach Paris, the past will sink behind you into the sea."

"Never, oh, never!" cried Louis, with emotion. "I shall never forget my benefactor, my second father!"

"My son, one easily forgets in Paris, and especially when he goes thither for the purpose of creating a new future out of the ruins of the past! But I shall never forget you; and if my presentiment should not deceive me, and I should soon die, you will learn after my death that I have loved you as a son. Now go, and I say to you, as another loved voice once said to you, and as the sick and the dying once repeated it to you, 'God bless you! All saints and angels protect you!'"

They remained locked in their tender embrace, and then parted—never to meet again!

That very night, before the morning began to dawn, General Desaix started, accompanied by his adjutant Louis, and a few servants. Their first goal was Alexandria, whither the command of General Bonaparte summoned them and a few others.

The proposed journey of the commanding general was still a carefully concealed secret, and the divan in Cairo had merely been informed that Bonaparte was planning to undertake a short journey in the Delta.

On the 22d of August, 1799, an hour after midnight, two French frigates left the harbor of Alexandria. On board of one of them was Bonaparte, the emperor of the future;—on the other was Louis Charles, the king of the past. Nameless and unknown, the descendant of the monarchs of France, with his sixteen years, returned to France—to France, that seemed no longer to remember its past, its kings, and to have no thoughts, no love, no admiration for aught excepting that new, brilliant constellation which had arisen over France—Bonaparte.

He had returned from Egypt to regain Italy, but he found other work awaiting him in Paris. This he brought to completion with the energy and boldness which characterized all his dealings. By a prompt stroke he put an end to the constitution which had prevailed till then, abrogated the Convention and the Council of Five Hundred, and gave the French republic a new constitution, putting at the head of the government three consuls, Sieyes, Roger Ducos, and himself. But these three consuls were intended to be a mere transition, a mere step forward in the victorious march of Bonaparte. After a few weeks they were superseded, and Bonaparte became the First Consul and the head of France.

On the 25th of December, 1799, France hailed General Bonaparte as the First Consul of the French republic. A new century was dawning, and with the beginning of this new century the gates of the Tuileries, the deserted palace of kings, opened to a new possessor. Bonaparte, the First Consul, took up his residence there; and in the first spring of the new century the consul, accompanied by Josephine, removed to St. Cloud for summer quarters. The park of Queen Marie Antoinette was given by the French nation to the First

Consul; and in the apartments where the queen with her son Louis Charles and her daughter Theresa once dwelt, Josephine, with her son Eugene and her daughter Hortense, now abode.

"I would I had remained in Egypt," sighed the dauphin often, when in the silence and solitude of his apartment he surrendered himself to his recollections and dreams. "It had been better to die young in a foreign land, while all the stars of hope were beaming above me, than to protract a miserable, obscure life here, and see all the stars fade out one by one!"

Yes, the stars of hope were paling one by one for the son of King Louis. No one thought of him, no one believed in him. He had died in the Temple, that was all that any one wanted to know. The dead was lamented by all, the living would have been unwelcome to any. He had died and been buried, little King Louis XVII., and no one spoke of him more.

The only subject of men's talk was the glory and greatness of the First Consul. The beauty and grace of Josephine were celebrated in the same halls which had once resounded with the praises of fair Queen Marie Antoinette. The half million lovers who had once bowed to Marie were now devoted to Josephine, and paid their homage to her with the same enthusiasm with which they had before worshipped the queen. The son of the general who once had given the oath of fidelity to King Louis XVI., the son of General Beauharnais, is now the adopted son of the ruler of France; while the son of the king must secrete himself and remain without name, rank, and title. It is his good fortune that Desaix is there to pity the forsaken one, and to give him a place in his home and his heart. No one else knows him; he is the adjutant of General Desaix, that is his only rank and title.

But he still remained the nephew of General Kleber, who had been left in Egypt, and who, at the end of the century, gained a decisive victory at Heliopolis over the Turks and Mamelukes. He remained the nephew of General Kleber, and at the end of the year 1800 the frigate l'Aigle, on its return from Egypt, brought a great packet for General Desaix. It contained many papers of value, many rolls of gold-pieces, besides gems and pearls. But it also contained a sealed black document directed to the adjutant of General Desaix. This document contained the will of Kleber, commander-in-chief of the French army in Egypt. He had given it to General Menou, together with his papers and valuables, with the intimation that directly after his death they should all be sent to General Desaix in France. General Menou followed this instruction, for Kleber was dead. The murderous bullet of a Mameluke killed him on the 14th of June, 1800. His will was the last evidence of his love for his nephew Louis, whom he designated as his only heir, and Kleber was rich through inherited wealth as well as the spoils of war.

But Louis Charles took no satisfaction, and it made no impression on him, when Desaix informed him that he was the possessor of a million. "A million! What shall I do with it?" answered Louis, sadly. "Were it a million soldiers, and I might put myself at their head and with them storm the Tuileries and make my entrance into St. Cloud, I should consider myself fortunate. But what advantage to me are a million of francs? I can begin nothing with them; I should have to establish a store and perhaps have the custom of the First Consul of the republic!"

"Hush! young man, hush!" replied Desaix, "you are bitter and sad, and I understand it, for the horizon is dark for you, and offers you no cheerful prospect; but a million francs is a good thing notwithstanding, and one day you will know how to prize it. This million of francs makes you a rich man, and a rich man is a free and independent man. If you do not wish to live longer as a soldier, you have the power to give up your commission and live without care, and that is something. My next business will be to assure you your fortune against all the uncertainties of the future, which are the more to be guarded against, as we are soon to advance into Italy again for the next campaign. I can, therefore, not put your property and your papers into your hands, for they constitute your future, and we must deposit them with some one with whom they shall be safe, and that must be with a man of peace. Do you know who this man is?"

"I know no one, general, excepting yourself," replied Louis, with a shrug, "whom I should dare to trust."

"But, fortunately, I know an entirely reliable man; shall I tell you who he is?"

"Do so, I beg you, general."

"His name is Fouché."

Louis started, and a deathly paleness covered his cheeks. "Fouché, the chief of police! Fouché, the traitor, who gave his voice in the Convention for the death of King Louis—to him, the red republican, a man of blood and treachery, do you want to convey my papers and my property?"

"Yes, Louis, for with him alone are they secure. Fouché will protect you, and will stand by you with just as much zeal as he once displayed in the persecution of the royal family. I know him well, and I vouch for him. Men must not always be judged by their external appearance. He who shows himself our enemy to-day, lends us to-morrow, it may be, a helpful arm, and becomes our friend, sometimes because his heart has been changed, and sometimes because his character is feeble. I cannot with certainty say which of these reasons has determined Fouché, but I am firmly convinced that he will be a protector and a friend to you, and that in no hands will your property and your papers be safer than in his." *

Louis made no reply; he dropped his head with a sigh, and submitted.

On, in the new century, rolled the victorious car of Bonaparte, down the Alps, into the fertile plains of Italy. The conqueror of Lodi and Arcole meant to take revenge on the enemies who had snatched back the booty—revenge on Austria, who had broken the peace of Campo Formio. And he did take this revenge at Marengo, where, on the 14th of June, he gained a brilliant victory over Austria, and won all Italy as the prize of the battle.

But the day was purchased at a sacrifice. General Desaix paid with his death for his impetuous onset. In the very thick of the fight, mortally wounded by a ball, he fell into the arms of his adjutant Louis, and only with ex-

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* Desaix's own words.—See "Mémoires du Duc de Normandie," p. 61.

treme peril could the latter, himself wounded, bear the general away from the *mêlée*, and not be trampled to death by the horses of his own soldiers.

Poor Louis Charles! He now stood entirely alone—the last friend had left him. Death had taken away every thing, parents, crown, home, name, friends. He was alone, all alone in the world—no man to take any interest in him, no one to know who he was.

Sunk in sadness, he remained in Alessandria after the battle of Marengo, and allowed his external wound to heal, while the internal one continued to bleed. He cursed death, because it had not taken him, while removing his last friend.

And when the wound was healed, what should he do?—under what name and title should he be enrolled in the army? His only protector was dead, and the adjutant was reported to have died with him. He put off the uniform which he had worn as the soldier of the republic which had destroyed his throne and his inheritance, and, in simple, unpretending garments, he returned to Paris, an unknown young man.

Desaix was right; it was, indeed, something to possess a million of francs. Poor as he was in love and happiness, this million of francs made him at least a free and independent man, and therefore he would demand his inheritance of him whom he formerly shunned because he was one of the murderers of his father.

Fouché received the young man exactly as Desaix had expected. He showed himself in the light of a sympathizing protector; he was touched with the view of this youth, whose countenance was the evidence of his lineage, the living picture of the unfortunate Louis XVI., whom Fouché had brought to the scaffold. Perhaps this man of blood and the guillotine had compunctions of conscience; perhaps he wanted to atone to the son for his injuries to the parents; perhaps he was planning to make of the son of the Bourbons a check to the ambitious consul of the republic; perhaps to humiliate the grasping Count de Lille, who was intriguing at all the European courts for the purpose of raising armies against the French republic. The son of Louis XVI. could be employed as a useful foil to all these political manœuvres, and subsequently he could either be publicly acknowledged, or denounced as an impostor, as circumstances might determine.

At present it suited the plans of the crafty Fouché to acknowledge him, and to assume the attitude of a protector. He put on a very respectful and sympathetic air to the poor solitary youth; with gentle, tremulous voice he called him your Majesty; he begged his pardon for the past; he spoke with such deep emotion and so solemn a tone of the good, great, and gentle Louis XVI., that the heart of the son was powerfully touched. And when Fouché, with flaming words of enthusiasm, began to speak of the noble, unhappy Queen Marie Antoinette, when with glowing eloquence he celebrated her beauty and her gentleness in time of good-fortune, her greatness and steadfastness in ill-fortune, all the anger of the young man melted in the tears of love which he poured out as he remembered his mother.

"I forgive you, Fouché; yes, I forgive you," he cried, extending both his hands. "I see plainly the power of political faction hurried you away; but your heart cannot be bad, for you love my noble mother. I forgive you, and I trust you."

Fouché, deeply moved, sank upon his knee before the dauphin, and called himself one of his loyal subjects, and promised to take all means to restore the young king to the throne of his fathers. He conjured Louis to trust him, and to enter upon no plan without asking his counsel.

Louis promised this. He told Fouché that he was the only man who had talked with him about the past without using ambiguous language; that he was surprised at this, and compelled to recognize as true what formerly had been fettered on his tongue. He told him that he had promised his rescuer, with a solemn oath, never to acknowledge himself as the son of Louis XVI., and King of France, till this rescuer and benefactor empowered him to do so, and released him from his vow of silence. He made it, therefore, the first condition of his confidence that Fouché should disclose his secret to no one, but carry it faithfully in his own breast.

Fouché promised all, and took a sacred oath that he would never reveal the secret confided to him by the King of France. But he confessed at the same time that the First Consul knew very well that the son of the king had been released from the Temple, and that among the posthumous papers of Kleber there was a letter directed to Bonaparte, stating that he, Kleber, knew very well that the little Capet was still living, and imploring Bonaparte to restore the orphan to the throne of the Lilies. The consul had, therefore, quietly made investigations, and learned that Louis had taken part as the adjutant of General Desaix in the battle of Marengo, that he had been wounded there, and remained in the hospital of Alessandria till his recovery. Since then all trace of the young man had been lost, and he had commissioned Fouché to discover the adjutant of Kleber and Desaix and bring him to him.

"You will not do that?" cried Louis, eagerly; "you will not disclose me?"

"Are you afraid of him?" asked Fouché, with a suspicious smile.

The young man blushed, and a cloud passed over his clear forehead.

"Fear!" he replied with a shrug. "The sons of my ancestors have no fear; and I have shown on the battle-fields of Aboukir and Marengo, and in the pest-houses of Jaffa, that I know not the word. But when one meets a bloodthirsty lion in his path he turns out of the way, and when a tiger extends its talons at one he flies; that is the duty of self-preservation, and not the flight of a coward."

"Do you believe, then, that this lion thirsts for royal blood?"

"I believe that he thirsts for royal rank, and that he will neglect no means to vanquish all hinderances that might intervene between himself and the throne. Do you believe, sir, that the man who, after the battle of Aboukir, sentenced five thousand prisoners to death, would hesitate a moment to take the life of a poor, defenceless young man such as I am? He would beat me into the dust as the lion does the flea which dares to play with his mane."

"It appears you know this lion very well," said Fouché, with a smile, "and I really believe you judge him rightly. But be without concern. He shall not know from me that

I am aware of you and your abiding-place. In order that Bonaparte shall not take me to be a bad detective, I shall show him in all other things that I am on the alert. In case of necessity, it may be that I shall have to resort to deception, and, in order to save your life, inform the consul that you are dead. There were a great many young officers who fell at Marengo, or afterward died as the result of their wounds. Why should not the adjutant of General Desaix have met this fate? Yes, I believe this will be the best. I will give you out as dead, in order to save your life. I will cause a paper to be prepared which shall testify that the adjutant of General Desaix, who lay there in the hospital, died there of his wounds and was buried."

"And so I shall disappear from life a second time?" asked Louis, sadly.

"Yes, sire, in order to enter anew upon it with greater splendor," replied Fouché, eagerly.

"Who knows whether this shall ever be?" sighed Louis. "How shall I be able to establish my identity if I die and am buried twice? Who will be my pledge that I shall be able to convince men that I am not a deceiver, and that my whole existence is not an idle tale? There are only a few who know and believe that little Capet escaped from the Temple, and went to Egypt as Kleber's adjutant. If, now, these few learn that the adjutant fell in battle, if the paper that testifies to his death is laid before them, how shall I subsequently be believed if I announce that I am alive, and that I am the one for whom I give myself out? The seal of royalty is impressed on no man's brow, and we know from history that there have been false pretenders."

"You shall show with your papers that you are none such," said Fouché, eagerly, "and God will grant that I, too, shall be living when the time shall be in which you may come forward with raised voice and demand your inheritance and your throne. Hope for that time, and meanwhile preserve your papers well. Carry them always with you, part with them neither day nor night, for in these papers rest your future and your crown. No other man besides yourself can take care of them. These papers are worth more to you than a million of francs, although even that should not be scorned. Here are the documents that give you possession of your wealth. I have deposited your funds in the Bank of France, and you can draw out money at any time by presenting these checks that I give you, simply writing your name upon them."

"By simply writing my name upon them!" cried Louis, bitterly. "But, sir, what is my name? How shall I be called? I was formerly designated as the nephew of Kleber, Colonel Louis, the adjutant of Desaix. But Colonel Louis can no longer acknowledge that he is alive, and you propose to convince the First Consul that the nephew of Kleber is dead. Who, then, am I? What name shall I subscribe to those papers? By what name shall the nameless, the dead and buried, the resurrected, the again dead and buried one—by what name shall he draw money from the bank?"

"Very true," said Fouché. "A name, or rather the mask of a citizen's or nobleman's name, must be your disguise, and it is imperatively necessary that we give you such, and provide you with papers that cannot be forged, which shall prove your existence, and secure you against every assault."

"Very good; then tell me how I shall be called," said Louis, sadly. "Be the godfather of the solitary and nameless."

"Well, I will," cried Fouché. "In the glamour of political passions I have raised my voice against the life of your father; full of regret I will raise my voice for the life of the son, and assist him to enter afresh upon life and into the society of men. Young man, I will give you a name and rank, till the French nation restore to you your true name and rank. You shall henceforth be called the Baron de Richemont. Will you accept it?"

"Yes, I will accept it," said Louis, gently. "To be the Baron de Richemont is better than to be a dead and buried person without any name."

"Very good, my lord baron," cried Fouché, "I will have the necessary certificates and papers made out, and enter your property in the Bank of France under the name of the Baron de Richemont. If you please, come to-morrow to me, and I will deliver to you the papers of Monsieur de Richemont."

"I shall come, be sure of that," said Louis, giving him his hand; "it seems to me my fate to go incognito through life, and God alone knows whether I shall ever abandon this incognito."

He saluted Fouché with a sad smile, and went out. The minister listened to the resounding footstep, and then broke out into loud, mocking laughter.

"Foolish boy!" he said, raising his hand threateningly, "foolish boy! You suppose that only God knows whether you will ever come out of your incognito. You mistake—besides God, Fouché knows it. Yes, Fouché knows that this incognito extends over you like a net, from which you never will escape. No, the Baron de Richemont shall never be transformed into King Louis XVII. But he shall be an instrument with which I will hold in check this ambitious Consul Bonaparte, who is striving for the throne, and this grasping Count de Lille, who in his exile calls himself King Louis XVIII.—the instrument with which I threaten when I am threatened. Only, my little Baron de Richemont, I do not know what I can make out of you, but I know that you shall make out of me a rich, dangerous, and dreaded man. Poor, credulous fool! How easily you fall into the pit! The Baron de Richemont shall never escape from it. I vouch for it—I, Fouché!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

FOUCHÉ.

The First Consul was walking with hasty steps up and down his cabinet. His eyes flashed, and his face, which elsewhere was impenetrable, like that of the brazen statues of the Roman emperors, disclosed the fiery impatience and stormy passions which raged within him. His lips, which were pressed closely together, opened now and then to mutter a word of threatening or of anger, and that word he hurled like a poisoned arrow directly at the man who, in a respectful attitude and with pallid cheeks, stood not far from the door, near the table covered with papers.—This man was Fouché, formerly the chief of police in Paris, and now a mere member of the senate of the republic. He had gone to the Tuileries in order to request a secret audience of Bonaparte, who had now forgotten the little prefix of "First" to his consular title, and now reigned supreme and alone over France.

Bonaparte suddenly paused in his rapid walk, coming to a halt directly in front of Fouché, and looked at him with flaming eyes, as if they were two daggers with which he meant to pierce deep into his heart. But Fouché did not see this, for he stood with downcast eyes, and appeared not to be aware that Bonaparte was so near him.

"Fouché," cried the consul, violently, "I know you, and I am not to be deceived by your indifferent, affected air! You shall know that I do not fear you—you and all the ghosts that you can conjure up. You think that you frighten me; you wish that I should pay you dearly for your secret. But you shall know that I am not at all of a timorous nature, and that I shall pay no money for the solution of a riddle which I may perhaps be able to solve without your help. I warn you, sir, you secret-vender, be well on your guard! You have your spies, but I have my police, and they inform me about every thing out of the usual course. It is known, sir, that you are carrying on a correspondence with people out of the country—understand me, with people out of the country!"

"Consul," replied Fouché, calmly, "I have certainly not known that the republic forbids its faithful servants to send letters abroad."

"The republic will never allow one of its servants to correspond with its enemies," cried Bonaparte, in thundering tones. "Be silent, sir! no evasions, no circumlocutions! Let us speak plainly, and to the point. You are in correspondence with the Count de Lille."

"You know that, consul, for I have had the honor to give you a letter myself, which the pretender directed to you, and sent to me to be delivered."

"A ridiculous, nonsensical letter," replied Bonaparte, with a shrug; "a letter in which this fool demands of me to bring him back to France, and to indicate the place which I wish to occupy in his government. By my word, an idiot could not write a more crazy document! I am to indicate the place which I wish to occupy in his government! Well, I shall do that; but there will be no place left near me for the Bourbons, whom France has spewed out, as one spews out mortal poison. These hated and weak Bourbons shall never attain to power and prestige again. France has turned away from them. France abhors this degenerate race of kings; it will erect a new edifice of power and glory, but there will be no room in it for the Bourbons! Mark that, intriguer, and build no air-castles on it. I demand of you an open confession, for I shall accuse you as a traitor and a royalist."

"Consul, I shall not avoid this charge," replied Fouché, calmly, "and I am persuaded that France will follow with interest the course of a trial which will unveil an important secret—which will inform it that the rightful King of France, according to the opinion of Consul Bonaparte, did not die in the Temple under the tender care of Simon the cobbler, but is still alive, and is, therefore, the true heir of the crown. That would occasion some joy to the royalists, surely!"

The consul stamped on the floor with rage, his eyes shot flames, and when he spoke again, his voice rang like peals of thunder, so angrily and so powerfully did it pour forth.

"I will change the pæans and the joy of these royalists to lamentations and wailings," he cried. "All the enemies of France shall know that I hold the sword in my hands, and mean to use it, not only against foes without, but foes within. France has given me this sword, and I shall not lay it down, even if all the kings of Europe, and all the Bourbons who lie in the vaults of St. Denis, leave their graves, to demand it from me! I am the living sword of France, and never shall this sword bow before the sceptre of a Bourbon. Fresh shoots might sooner spring from the dead stick which the wanderer carries through the desert, than a Bourbon sceptre could grow from the sword of Bonaparte; and all the same, whether this Bourbon calls himself Louis XVII. or Louis XVIII.! Mark that, Fouché, and mark also that when I once say 'I will,' I shall know how to make my will good, even if the whole world ventures to confront me."

"I know that, consul," said Fouché, with deference.

"God gave you, for the weal of France, an iron will and a brain of fire, and destined you to wear not only laurels, but crowns."

A flame glared from the eyes of the consul and played over the face of Fouché, but the latter appeared not to notice it, for he cast down his eyes again, and his manner was easy and unconstrained.

"You now speak a word which is not becoming," said Bonaparte, calmly. "I am the first servant of the republic, and in a republic there are no crowns."

"Not citizens' crowns, general?" asked Fouché, with a faint smile. "I mean, that this noblest of crowns can everywhere be acceptable, and no head has merited such a crown more than the noble Consul Bonaparte, who has made the republic of France a worthy rival of its sister in North America."

Bonaparte threw his head proudly back. "I am not ambitious of the honor," he said, "of being Washington of France."

"Yet you are he, general," replied Fouché, with a smile. "Only the Washington of France does not live in the White House which a republic has built, but in the Tuileries, which he has received as the heir of the French kings. General, as the worthiest, the greatest, the most powerful, and the most signally called, you have come into the possession of the inheritance of the kings of France. For to this inheritance belongs also the crown of France. Why do you refuse this, while accepting all the rest?"

"And what if I show you that I do not want it?" asked Bonaparte. "And what if I should tell you that I do not feel myself worthy to assume the whole, undivided inheritance of the Bourbons? Would you be foolish and senseless enough to believe such an idle tale?"

"Consul, you have already done so many things that are wonderful, and have brought so many magic charms to reality, that I no longer hold any thing to be impossible, as soon as you have laid your hand upon it."

"And therefore you hold a concealed magician's wand, which you propose to draw forth at some decisive moment, and present to me, as the cross is presented to Beelzebub in the tale?"

"I do not understand you, consul," replied Fouché, with the most innocent air in the world.

"Well, then, I will make myself intelligible The magician's wand, which you are keeping concealed, is called Louis XVII. Oh! do not shake your cunning head; do not deny with your smooth lips, which once uttered the death-sentence of Louis XVI., and which now are used to teach a fool and a pretender that he is the son of the murdered king. Truly, it is ridiculous. The regicide wants to atone for his offence by hatching a fable, and making a king out of a manikin."

"General, no fable, and no manikin," cried Fouché, with a threatening voice. "The son of the unfortunate king is alive, and—"

"Ah!" interrupted Bonaparte, triumphantly, "so you confess at last, you reveal your great secret at length! I have driven the sly fox out of his hole and the hunt can now begin. It will be a hot chase, I promise you, and I shall not rest till I have drawn the skin over the ears of the fox, or—"

"Until he says his *pater peccavi?*" asked Fouché, with a gentle smile.

"Until he delivers to me the changeling whom he wants to use as his *Deus ex machina*," replied Bonaparte. "My dear sir, it helps you not at all to begin again this system of lies. Your anger has betrayed you, and I have succeeded in outwitting the fox. The so-called 'son of the king is alive;' that has escaped you, and you cannot take it back."

"No, it cannot be taken back," replied Fouché, with a sigh. "I have disclosed myself, or rather I have been outwitted. You are in all things a hero and a master, in cunning as much as in bravery and discretion. I bow before you as before a genius whom God Himself has sent upon the earth, to bring the chaotic world into order again; I bow before you as before my lord and master; and instead of opposing you, I will henceforth be content with being your instrument, provided that you will accept me as such."

"That is, Fouché, provided that I will fulfil your conditions," cried Bonaparte, with a shrug. "Very well, name your conditions! Without circumlocution! What do you demand?"

"Consul, in order that we may understand one another, we must both be open and unreserved. Will you permit me to be free with you?"

"Certainly," replied Bonaparte, with a condescending nod.

"Consul, you have thrust me aside, you have no longer confidence in me. You have taken from me the post of minister of police, and given it to my enemy Regnier. That has given me pain, it has injured me; for it has branded me before all the world as a useless man, whom Bonaparte suspects. Your enemies have believed that my alienation from you would conduce to their advantage, and that out of the dismissed police prefect they might gain an enemy to Bonaparte. Conspirators of all kinds have come to me—emissaries of Count de Lille, deputies from the royalists in Vendée, as well as from the red republicans, by whom you, Bonaparte, are as much hated as by the royalists, for they will never forgive you for putting yourself at the head of the republic, and making yourself their master. All of these parties have made propositions to me, all of them want me to join them. I have lent my ear to them all, I have been informed of all their plans, and am at this hour the sworn ally of both the republicans and the royalists. Oh! I beg you," continued Fouché, as Bonaparte started up, and opened his lips to speak—"I beg you, general, hear me to the end, and do not interrupt me till I have told you all.—Yes, I have allied myself to three separate conspiracies, and have become zealous in them all. There is, first, that of the republicans, who hate you as a tyrant of the republic; there is, in the second place, the conspiracy of the royalists, who want to put the Count de Lille on the throne; and third, there is that of the genuine Capetists, who want to make the 'orphan of the Temple' Louis XVII. These three conspiracies have it as their first object to remove and destroy Consul Bonaparte. Yes, to reach this end the three have united, and made a mutual compromise. Whichever party succeeds in murdering you, is to come into power, and the others are to relinquish the field to it: and so if Bonaparte is killed by a republican dagger, the republic is to remain at present the recognized form of government; and if the ball of a royalist removes you, the republicans strike their banner, and grant that France shall determine, by a general ballot, whether it shall be a republic or a kingdom."

"Well," asked Bonaparte, calmly, as Fouché closed, and cast an inquiring glance at the consul's face, which was, notwithstanding, entirely cold and impenetrable—"well, why do you stop? I did not interrupt you with a question. Go on!"

"I will, consul. I have made myself a member of these three conspiracies; for, in order to contend with the heads of Cerberus, one must have them all joined; and in order to be the conqueror in a great affair, one must know who all his enemies are, and what are all their plans. I know all the plans of the allies, and because I know them, it is within my power to bring discontent and enmity among them, using for this end the third conspiracy—that of the dependants of Louis XVII., the orphan of the Temple. Through sympathy with him, I have divided the party of royalists; I have withdrawn from the Count de Lille many of his important dependants, and even some of the chief conspirators, who came to Paris to contend for Louis XVIII., have recently in secret bent the knee to Louis XVII., and sworn fidelity to him."

"That is not true," cried Bonaparte, vehemently. "You are telling me nurses' stories, with which children may be frightened, but men not. There are no secret meetings in Paris!"

"General, if your minister of police, Regnier, has told you so, he only shows that he is no man to be at the head of the police, and knows nothing of the detective service. I tell you, general, there are secret societies in Paris, and I ought to know, for I am a member of four separate ones."

"Ah! sir," sneered Bonaparte, "you are out of your head! Before, you spoke of three conspiracies, and now they have grown to be four."

"I am speaking now of secret societies, consul, for not every secret society can be called a conspiracy. Before, when I was giving account of conspiracies, I mentioned three; now, when we speak of secret societies, I have to mention a fourth. But this does not deserve the name of a conspiracy, for its object is not murder and revolution, nor does it arm itself with daggers and pistols."

"I should be curious to know the name of your fourth society," cried Bonaparte, impatiently.

"I will satisfy your curiosity, general. This fourth secret society bears the name 'the Bonapartists,' or—allow me to approach you closer, that the walls of the old palace may not hear the word—or 'the Imperialists.'"

Bonaparte shrank back, and a glow of red passed for a moment over his cheeks. "What do you mean by that?"

"I mean by that, general, what I have already said: your brow is made not to wear laurels alone, but a crown, and there is only one way to destroy the other three conspiracies—the way proposed by the fourth secret society. In order to make the efforts of the republicans and royalists ineffective, and to tread them under your feet, France needs an emperor."

"And do you want to make your manikin, Louis XVII., Emperor of France?"

"No, general," answered Fouché, solemnly—"no; I want to make Consul Bonaparte Emperor of the French!"

The consul trembled, and his eyes flashed through the apartment, the former cabinet of Louis XVI., as if he wanted to convince himself that no one had heard this dangerous word of the future. Then he slowly bent forward without meeting Fouché's looks, which were intently fixed upon him.

A pause ensued—a long, anxious pause. Then Bonaparte slowly raised his eye again, and now it was filled as with sunlight.

"Is your fourth secret society numerous?" he asked, with that magical smile which won all hearts.

"It comprises artists, poets, scholars, and above every thing else, officers and generals," replied Fouché. "It grows more numerous every day, and as fortunately I have only been deposed from my place of minister of police, but still remain a member of the senate of the republic, it has been my effort to gain over in the senate influential members for my secret society of imperialists. If my hopes are crowned with success, the secret society will soon become an open one, and the senate will apply to you with a public request to put an end to all these conspiracies and intrigues, to place yourself at the head of France, and accept the imperial crown which the senate offers you. But—"

"I comprehend your 'but,' Fouché," interrupted Bonaparte, eagerly. "You want to make your conditions. An imperial crown does not fall direct from heaven upon the head of a man; there must be hands there to take it, and it might happen that they would be crushed by the falling crown. They must be paid for their heroism, therefore. Let us suppose, then, that I give credence to all your stories, even that about the empire of the future—tell me, now, what you demand."

"General, if I show you and all France by facts that the country is rent by conspiracies, that the cancer of secret societies is eating into the very marrow of the land, and imperilling all its institutions, will you confess to me then that I am better adapted to be the head of the police than M. Regnier d'Angely, who insists and dares to say to you that there are no secret societies in France?"

"Prove to me by facts the existence of your conspiracies, and I will commission you to help me destroy this hydra's head. Give me the proofs, and you shall be head of police again."

Fouché bowed. "You shall have the proofs, general, to-day—at once, provided that we thoroughly understand each other. I am ambitious, general, and I have no wish to be driven back for a single day into nothingness, as I should be, if my enemies withdraw their confidence in me. Now I am, at least, a member of the senate; but if the senate is dissolved, and I should subsequently be deposed again from the head of the police, I should be nothing but Fouché—Fouché fallen out of favor. *Voilà tout!*"

"No, not so," said Bonaparte, with a smile. "You will always be known as the murderer of the king; that is a fine title for a republican, is it not?"

"Ah, general, I see that you understand me," cried Fouché. "We are now talking about a name, a position, a title for me. Provided that here in the Tuileries a throne is reëstablished, we must have a court again, men with orders, titles, and dignities."

"It is true," said Bonaparte, thoughtfully. "The world continues to revolve in the same circles of folly and vanity, and after making an effort to withdraw from them, it falls back again into the old ruts. Men are nothing but actors, and every one wants to adorn himself with glistening rags, in order to take the first part, and have his name go upon the poster of history. Well, how would you be called, Fouché, if the drama of an empire should really be brought forward upon the great stage of the world?"

"I should like the title of a prince or duke, sire."

Bonaparte could scarcely suppress the smile of satisfaction that played over his face. It was the first time that he had ever been addressed as king or emperor, and this "sire" which Fouché dropped into the ear of Bonaparte like a sweet poison, flattered his senses and soothed him like delightful music. But the strength of his genius soon resumed its sway, and he broke out into a loud, merry laugh.

"Confess, Fouché," he cried, "that it is comical to hear the consul talking with a senator of the republic about an empire and ducal titles. Truly, if the strict republicans of your conspiracy number one should hear this, they would be justified in accusing us as traitors and conspirators."

"We must get the start of them—we must accuse them."

"If we possess secure means to do so."

"I possess them, and I will give them to you, Consul Bonaparte, as soon as the emperor of the future assures me of a princely title, in addition to the chieftaincy of police."

"Very well," said Bonaparte, laughing, "the emperor of the future promises you that as soon as he is able to bake a batch of these delicacies, he will put his chief of police in the oven and draw him out as a prince or a duke. The emperor of the future gives you his word of honor that he will do it. Are you satisfied now, my lord republican?"

"Sire, completely satisfied," said Fouché, bowing low.

"And now let us talk together seriously," said Bonaparte. "You have spoken of conspiracies; you assert that they exist, but do not forget that you have promised me *tangible* proofs—understand me well, *tangible* proofs; that is, it is not enough for me to see the papers and the lists of conspirators who have escaped into foreign lands—I want persons, men of flesh and blood—traitors whom I may hang, not in effigy, but in reality, and who may serve as a warning example to the whole herd of conspirators, and put an end forever to this nonsense. I am wearied of being perpetually threatened by traitors, poisoned daggers, air-guns, plots, and intrigues, of all kinds. It is time to hunt down the chief men of these bravoes who have been sent here from England, Germany, Russia, and Italy, and I have had enough of illustrating the old proverb, 'Hang the little thief and let the great one run.' I mean to have the great thief and to hang him, for that is the only way of intimidating these fellows and inspiring them with respect."

"Sire, you shall have your great thieves," said Fouché, with a smile.

"Give them into my hands, and I promise you they shall never escape," cried Bonaparte, eagerly. "It is high time to make an example, and show these people at last that I claim the right of paying back. The Count de Lille and the Duke d'Enghien are always egging their conspirators upon me; they appear to have no other aim than to get rid of me, and are unwearied with their daggers, infernal machines, and counter-plots. But their own persons, and those of their highest helpers, always remain beyond reach. They arrange their plans always at a safe distance, and risk nothing by this; for, if we take some of their subordinate tools and punish them, they make an outcry about barbarity and cruelty, and appeal to their sacred right of using all means to regain their inheritance, and reëstablish the throne in France. They do not deny that they would have no conscientious scruples about shedding my blood. Now, why should I have any about shedding theirs? Blood for blood, that is the natural and unavoidable law of retaliation, and woe to him who lays claim to it! These Bourbons do so. I have never injured one of them personally; a great nation has placed me at its head; my blood is worth as much as theirs, and it is time at last that I make it *al pari* with theirs. I will no longer serve as a target for all murderers, and then afterward only find the dagger, instead of seizing the hands that ply it. Let me once have hold of the hands, and all the daggers will disappear forever!"

"I will give these hands into your power, or, at least, some fingers of them."

"I want them all," cried Bonaparte, eagerly,—"all the fingers, all the hands. You have spoken of three different conspiracies. I want the leaders of them, and then all others may run. If the hydra loses its three heads, it must at last die. So give me the three heads, that of the republicans and of the two royalist parties. The head of conspiracy number two I know; it is the Count de Lille. He is the sly spider who always withdraws behind his nets, but I know the hand, too, that is set in motion by this head; it is the Duke d'Enghien. He is an untiring conspirator, wholly occupied with infernal machines and daggers for me. Ah! let him take care of himself, the little Duke d'Enghien. If I take him, I will exercise the right of retaliation upon him, for I am determined to have peace. We now come to your conspiracy number three, to your *Deus ex machina*, the so-called Louis XVII. This *Deus* really exists?"

"Yes, general, he exists."

Bonaparte laughed aloud, but his laughter sounded like a threat. "I have heard of this story," he said. "The good-natured Kleber believed it, and, after his death, a paper was given to me, written by him, and directed to me, which stated that his so-called nephew Louis was the heir of the King of France, and implored me earnestly to take the orphan of the Temple under my protection. I instituted inquiries for him at once; it was after the battle of Marengo, and this Monsieur Louis was, till then, adjutant of General Desaix."

"Yes, general, adjutant of Desaix, down to the battle of Marengo—that is, to the death of Desaix."

"If I mistake not, his adjutant was wounded in the battle, and lay at the hospital in Alessandria."

"It is so, general. I wonder how closely you have been informed respecting the fortunes of this young man."

"From that time all trace of him has been lost, and all my inquiries have proved in vain. The adjutant of Desaix, who fought so bravely, and who bore my dying comrade in his arms, deserved advancement, and I wanted to give it to him, and therefore searched for him, but in vain. I believed him dead, and now you come and tell me about a conspiracy in favor of Louis XVII. This young pretender is still alive, then, and there are childlike souls who believe his story, are there?"

"General, he says little, for he is very silent and reticent, but he has testimonials which speak for him, and which show that his story is not an idle tale, but a fragment of history. His papers give clear and undeniable evidence of his lineage and the course of his life."

"I should like to see these papers once," said the consul.

"He never lets them go out of his hands, for he knows very well that they are his security for a crown."

"Then bring me the man himself, and then I shall have him and his papers," said Bonaparte, with a growl like a lion's. "Is not he the head of the conspiracy?"

"Yes, general, the head of a conspiracy which I have conducted, because I meant to have all the threads in my hands, if I was to see clearly. In order to prove the royalists, I threw them this bait, and many of them have taken the hook and come over to the young king. In this way I have made a division in the ranks of the royalists, and the Count de Lille already sees the consequences. The so-called orphan of the Temple has at this hour no enemy who hates him more than the Count de Lille."

"But this enmity of the Count de Lille vanishes like a glow-worm in the darkness. I want tangible proofs by which I can arrest my enemies. Can you give them to me?"

"General, it will not be difficult to do this. We will speak of it hereafter. Allow me first a word about this dangerous adjutant of Desaix, Colonel Louis. You said, general, that you made futile efforts to gain information about this interesting and brave young man. Those efforts were made in the years when M. Regnier d'Angely was chief of police, in which my enemies succeeded in withdrawing the confidence of the First Consul from me. But had I been chief of police at that time, I should have been able to tell you that the young man whom you were seeking, and respecting whom you obtained no information, was living here in Paris."

"What!" cried Bonaparte, in amazement. "This so-called Louis XVII. in Paris, then?"

"General, he is still here; he has been living in Paris for about four years—about as long as M. Regnier has been head of police."

"And Regnier has told me nothing about it! Has he not known that so dangerous a person was living in Paris?"

Fouché shrugged his shoulders. "Monsieur Regnier—who doubts the existence of secret societies in France, and tells you that the assassins who have so often of late imperilled your life have all been sent hither from foreign parts by the pretenders to the crown, and that there are no conspirators in France—Monsieur Regnier could not of course know the head of this secret society. He left them to follow their own pleasures unhindered here in Paris. But I know them, and I give you my word of honor, general, that the so-called nephew of Kleber is living here in Paris. Directly after his arrival he came to me, and I handed to him the papers and documents which Desaix intrusted to me, and which I had solemnly sworn to deliver to his adjutant Louis. The young man gave me his confidence, and when I spoke to him regretfully and with enthusiasm about his father and his mother, and addressed him as 'his majesty,' I won his love. He opened his heart to me, confessed that he was Louis XVII., and asked my counsel and help. I promised him both, and showed myself to him in a very compliant and devoted mood. My first counsel was, that he should live incognito under a borrowed name. In order that this might be possible, I gave him the name for his incognito, and had all the necessary documents prepared, the certificate of his birth, baptism, the marriage of his parents, and the will of his relatives."

"And all these documents were false and forged?" said Bonaparte, in amazement.

"There are everywhere pliable public officials in France," replied Fouché, with a smile. "I did not content myself with procuring for my *protégé* the papers which insured him an honorable name, respectable family position, and a life without care; I did much more for him. I followed the efforts already related with others. I had a certificate of the death of M. Louis prepared, so as to give him a passport out of life. In order to protect himself from every injury, I told him that he, as the adjutant of Desaix, must pass as dead. He approved of it, and I took the pains to procure from the hospital at Alessandria a duly signed and sealed certificate that Colonel Louis, the adjutant of General Desaix, died of his wounds there."

"Good God!" cried Bonaparte, "is every thing in life to be bought and sold thus?"

"Yes, general, every thing—loyalty and love, life and death. I have caused the son of the King of France to die, and then rise again—and all with gold. But, when the certificate arrived, a change had occurred in my relations. I had been removed from office, and Regnier was my successor. I kept the certificate in my possession; but, in order to secure my *protégé* against what might befall me in case of my death, I wrote to him that I had received the papers, and that he would live without danger in Paris, under his assumed name. This letter I signed with my whole name, and set my seal to it, that in case of need it might be of service to him."

"Fouché, you are a sly fox," said Bonaparte, with a laugh. "It is easier to get out of the way of a cannon-ball than out of your snares. One might say to you, in the words of the King of Prussia, 'God defend me from my friends, from my enemies I can defend myself!' According to this you have caused Colonel Louis to die for friendship's sake, and rise again under another name."

"Yes, general, that is it! Colonel Louis—that is, the rightful king, Louis XVII.—is a tool in my hands, which I hold as a check to all parties, and which I can hold up or withdraw according as it pleases me. At present my game is not merely to bring disunion and hatred into the ranks of the royalists, but to bring over many republicans who have a soft heart, to be zealous partisans of the young and unfortunate king."

"And afterward," said Bonaparte, with a sterner tone, "you might make use of this instrument to intimidate that fourth party of which you spoke before—the Bonapartists. But you have been mistaken, Fouché; this reckoning does not do—your cunning has overreached itself. You do not terrify me; and if it could really happen that the French nation should offer me an imperial crown, at the same time that I should accept it, I should put my foot on the neck of all rebels and pretenders. With a single tread I would crush them all. I want no parties, no political factions; I want to bring all these risings and agitations to silence. There shall be no secret societies in France; and against each and every conspirator, whatever his rank may be, I will bring from this time forth the whole weight of the law. Mark this, Fouché! I mean to make an end of all parties, and only when you shall give their chiefs into my hand—not for my personal vengeance, for I cherish no vengeance against those cowardly worms of conspirators, but for the righteous punishment and retaliatory laws of France—only when you are able, by one grand *coup*, and one well-founded charge, to destroy all conspiracies, and bring all secret coalitions to the light, only then shall you become chief of police—only then will the future emperor give you the title of duke."

"General, I build on your word, and I am sure of becoming chief of police and duke. We will put an end to all conspiracies."

"And to the Monsieur Louis, too," cried Bonaparte, eagerly. "It is a disagreeable and troublesome figure. So long as he lives he would live in the ermine of the imperial cloak like a troublesome insect, which always stings and pricks. One must not allow such insects to find their way into his fur, and this Monsieur Louis must be put out of the way once for all. I hope he has entered deeply enough into the conspiracy, not to come out of it again with a whole skin!"

"General, I have told you already, that day before yesterday his dependants saluted him, in a secret gathering, as their king. It is true, indeed, that the poor little fellow strongly opposed it, and obstinately refused to accept all honors, but the fact remains unchanged."

"And on the ground of this fact shall he be apprehended," cried Bonaparte, with a threatening voice. "There must be an example made, and this Louis is a suitable person for it. He must be the *bête de souffrance* for all the rest. He is the head of a conspiracy; we will crush this head, and the limbs will fall of themselves. Besides the sensitive souls who love nurses' stories and believe in every thing, there will be no one who will weep for him. No one will lament his death, but he will be a warning to all. Direct yourself to this, Fouché, and set all the infernal machines of your intrigues in operation that we may put an end to conspiracy."

"General, only one thing is wanting; it is that I be at the head of the police, and have the power in my hands to make my infernal machines effectual."

"But I have told you that I will appoint you as minister only when you give me incontrovertible proofs that your conspiracies are not the fabric of your own phantasy."

"Very well, general, now that we are at one, I am prepared to give you these proofs. I have told you that the royalists and republicans have united for the purpose of taking your life. They have chosen fifty men by ballot, in foreign parts, who are to come to Paris and accomplish here the great work of your destruction. These fifty assassins have arrived in Paris, and their chief men had an interview yesterday with the chiefs of the conspiracies here."

"Fouché!" cried Bonaparte, with a threatening voice, "think well what you are saying. You are playing for the stake of your own head! If these fifty assassins are creatures of your own imagination, it is you who will have to pay for it."

"These fifty men have been in Paris since the day before yesterday," rejoined Fouché, quietly. "They came hither by different roads, and appearing like simple travellers, and yesterday they had their first interview with the chief of the republican party."

"Who is this chief? Name him, or I will call you a liar and impostor!"

"This chief," said Fouché, slowly, and measuring every word, "this chief is General Moreau."

Bonaparte uttered a low cry, an ashy paleness suffused his cheeks; he pressed his lips together, and his eyes flamed out such darts of rage that even Fouché trembled and lowered his gaze.

"Moreau," muttered Bonaparte, after a long pause, "Moreau a conspirator, a traitor! Moreau in an alliance with assassins whom the royalists are sending out against me! I knew very well that he was my enemy, but I did not think that his enmity would lead him to be a murderer!"

He walked up and down with quick steps, his hands folded behind his back, then stopped short before Fouché and looked him full in the face.

"Fouché, do you abide by your assertion, that Moreau is a conspirator?"

"I abide by it, general."

"And those fifty assassins, whom the royalists have sent, are in Paris?"

"Yes, general, they are in Paris, and Georges and Pichegru are at their head."

"Fouché," cried Bonaparte, clinching his fist and raising it threateningly, "Fouché, so sure as God lives, I will have you hanged as a traitor if you have lied!"

"General, as surely as God lives, I have spoken the truth. I came here to show you what I am, and what Regnier is. I have waited here till the whole net of these conspiracies should be spread out and be fully complete. The time has come when I must speak; and now I say to you, general, take some steps, for there is danger on foot!"

Bonaparte, trembling with emotion, had thrown himself into an arm-chair, and took, as was his custom in moments of the greatest excitement, his penknife from the writing-desk, and began to whittle on the back of the chair.

Fouché stood leaning against the wall, and looked with complete calmness and an invisible smile at this singular occupation of the general, when the door of the cabinet was opened, and the Mameluke Roustan appeared at the entrance.

"Consul," he said, softly, "Councillor Réal is again here, and pressingly desires an audience."

Bonaparte rose, and threw away the knife. "Réal!" he cried in a loud tone.

The man who was summoned immediately appeared at the open door—a tall, grave personage, with a face so pale and distorted that Bonaparte noticed it, despite his great agitation.

"What is it, Réal?" he asked, eagerly. "Have you spoken with the condemned man?"

"Yes, general, I have spoken with him," whispered Réal, with pale lips.

"And it is as I said, is it not? This Doctor Querolle has only pretended to be able to make great disclosures, only to prolong his own life a few hours. He has poisoned his wife, in order to marry his mistress, and the poisoner is executed."

"General," cried Fouché, almost with an air of joy, "I knew Querolle, and I knew that his wife poisoned herself. Querolle is not a poisoner."

"What is he then, M. Omniscience?"

"General, he is a conspirator!"

"A conspirator!" repeated Bonaparte, and now his troubled face turned again to the councillor. "Réal, what do you know? What did the condemned man say to you?"

"Consul, he swore that he was innocent of the death of his wife, but he acknowledged himself a member of a conspiracy, the object of which is to murder General Bonaparte. He asserts that the royalists and republicans have allied themselves; that fifty emissaries of the Count de Lille and the Duke d'Enghien, Pichegru and Georges at their head, have crept into Paris; that they had an interview yesterday with General Moreau, and with the so-called King Louis XVII., who is secreted in Paris, and that at this hour those fifty men are prowling around the streets of the city, and are watching the Tuileries, waiting for an opportunity to kill the First Consul."

The troubled eye of Bonaparte turned slowly from the pale face of Councillor Réal to the calm, sagacious face of Fouché, which guarded itself well from expressing any token of triumph and satisfaction. The consul then walked slowly through the room, and with his foot pushed open the door leading into the great reception-room, in which, at this hour every day, all the dignitaries of the republic were assembled, to receive the orders of Bonaparte.

"Murat!" cried Bonaparte, loudly; and at once the person summoned, General Murat, at that time governor of Paris, appeared at the door of the cabinet.

"Murat," said Bonaparte, in the tones in which he issued his commands on the battle-field, "give orders at once that the gates of Paris be closed, and that no stranger be allowed to go out of the city till you have further orders. You will come to me in an hour, and receive a proclamation to your soldiers, which you will sign; have it printed and posted at the street-corners of Paris. Make all these preparations! Go!"

Murat withdrew from the room with a salutation of deference, and now the commanding voice of Bonaparte summoned his chief adjutant from the reception-room.

"Duroc," said the First Consul, with calm, almost solemn voice, "you will go with twelve soldiers in pursuit of General Moreau, and arrest him wherever you find him."

The noble, open face of Duroc grew pale, and put on an expression of horror and amazement. "General," he whispered, "I beg that—"

But this time Bonaparte would not listen to the soothing words of his favorite.

"No replies!" he thundered. "You have only to obey! Nothing more!"

Duroc, pale and agitated, withdrew, and Bonaparte closed the door of the cabinet. "Réal," he said, "return to the prison of the condemned man; take him his pardon, and bring him to me, that I may hear him myself. Hasten!"

Réal withdrew, and Bonaparte and Fouché remained alone.

"You have given your proofs, Fouché, and now I believe you. When wolves are to be hunted down you are a good bloodhound, and we will begin the chase. I make you from this moment chief of the secret police; your first duty will be to bring this matter to an end, and help me to tear to pieces the whole murderous web, your reward being that I will nominate you again minister of police.* I will fulfil my promise so soon as you shall have made good yours, and put me in possession of the chief conspirators."

"You have just arrested Moreau, general," replied Fouché, deferentially. "I give you my word that in a few hours Pichegru and Georges will be apprehended."

"You forget the chief person," cried Bonaparte, over whose brazen forehead a thunder-cloud seemed to pass.

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* The appointment of Fouché as the chief of police took place in June of the year 1804.

"You forget the caricature of buried royalty, the so-called King Louis XVII. Hush! I tell you I will have this man. I will draw out the fangs of this royal adder, so that he cannot bite any more! Bring the man before me. The republic is an angry goddess, and demands a royal offering. Give this impostor into my hands, or something worse will happen! Go, and I advise you to bring me, before the sun goes down, the tidings that this fabled King Louis is arrested, or the sun of your good fortune is set forever! Now away! Go out through the little corridor, and then through the secret gate—you know the way. Go!"

Fouché did not dare to contradict the imperative order, but softly and hastily moved toward the curtain which led to the gloomy anteroom, and thence through a door, which only those initiated knew how to open, and which led to the little corridor.

But scarcely had Fouché entered this little dismal room, when a hand was laid upon his arm, and a woman's voice whispered to him:

"I must speak to you—at once! Come! this way!"

The hand drew him forward to the wall, a door sprang open without sound, and the voice whispered: "Four stairs down. Be careful!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

JOSEPHINE.

FOUCHÉ did not hesitate; he followed his guide down the little staircase, along the dark corridor, and up another short staircase. He had recognized the voice, and knew that his leader was no other than Josephine, the wife of the First Consul.

Through the secret door at the end of the corridor they entered a small and gloomy antechamber, exactly like the one which adjoined the cabinet of the consul, and from it Josephine ushered Fouché into her cabinet.

"You will say nothing to Bonaparte about this secret way, Fouché," said Josephine, with a gentle, supplicatory tone. "He does not know of it. I have had it made without his knowledge while he was in Boulogne last year. Will you swear to me that you will not reveal it?"

"I do swear, madame."

"God knows that I have not had it made out of curiosity to overhear Bonaparte," continued Josephine. "But it is necessary sometimes for me to know what is going on, and that when the general is angry I should hasten to him to calm him and turn aside his wrath. I have warded off many a calamity since this private way was opened, and I have been able to overhear Bonaparte. But what have I been compelled to listen to to-day! Oh, Fouché, it was God Himself who impelled me to listen! I was with him when you were announced, and I suspected that your visit purported something unusual, something dreadful. I have heard all, Fouché—all, I tell you! I know that his life is threatened, that fifty daggers are directed toward him. O God! this perpetual fear and excitement will kill me! I have no peace of mind, no rest more! Since the unhappy day when we left our dear little house to live in the Tuileries, since that day there has been an end to all joy! Why did we do it? why did we not remain in our little Luxembourg? why have we been persuaded to live in the palace of the kings?"

"It is proper for the greatest man in France to live in the house where the departed race of kings once had their home," replied Fouché.

"Oh, yes," sighed Josephine. "I know these tricks of speech, with which you have turned the head of my poor Bonaparte. Oh! you, you, his flatterer, you who urged him on, will bear the blame if misfortune breaks in upon us! You have intoxicated him with the incense of adulation; you pour into his veins daily and hourly the sweet poison which is to destroy our happiness and our peace! He was so good, so cheerful, so happy, my Bonaparte! He was contented with the laurels which victory laid upon his brow, but you continued to whisper in his ear that a crown would add new grace to his laurels. You flattered his ambition; and what was quietly sleeping at the bottom of his heart, and what I hushed with my kisses and with my hand, that you took all efforts to bring out into the light:

his vanity—his love of power! Oh, Fouché! you are wicked, cruel, and pitiless! I hate, I abhor you all, for you are the murderers of my Bonaparte!"

She spoke all this softly, with quick breath, while the tears were streaming over her beautiful face, and her whole frame trembled with emotion. She then sank, wholly overcome, upon a lounge, and pressed her small hands, sparkling with jewels, over her eyes.

"Madame, you are unjust," replied Fouché, softly. "If you have overheard my conversation with the First Consul, you are aware that the direct object of my coming was to save him from murderers, and to insure his precious life."

"And, moreover, to pour into his ear the poison of a future imperial crown!" said Josephine, indignantly. "Oh, I know it! With talk of conspiracies and of daggers you urged him on. You want him to be an emperor, that you may be a prince or duke! I see it all, and I cannot prevent it, for he no longer listens to me, he no longer heeds the voice of his Josephine, only that of his ambitious flatterers, and he will put on the imperial crown and complete our misfortune! Oh! I knew it! This imperial crown will ruin us. It was prophesied to me in my youth that I should be an empress, but it was added that it would be for no long time. And yet I should like to live, and I should like to be happy still!"

"You will be so, madame," said Fouché, with a smile. "It is always good fortune to wear an imperial crown, and your beautiful head is worthy to bear one."

"No, no," she cried, angrily. "Do not try me with your flatteries! I am contented with being a beloved and happy wife; I desire no crown. The crowned heads that have dwelt in the Tuileries have become the prey of destruction, and the pearls of their diadems have been changed to tears! But what advantage is it that I should say all this to you? It is all in vain, in vain! I did not bring you to talk of this. It was something entirely different. Listen, Fouché, I cannot prevent Bonaparte's becoming an emperor, but you shall not make him a regicide! I will not suffer it! By Heaven, and all the holy angels, I will not suffer it!"

"I do not understand you, madame. I do not know what you mean."

"Oh, you understand me very well, Fouché. You know that I am speaking of King Louis XVII."

"Ah, madame, you are speaking of the impostor, who gives himself out to be the 'orphan of the Temple.'"

"He is it, Fouché. I know it, I am acquainted with the history of his flight. I was a prisoner in the Conciergerie at the same time with Toulan, the queen's loyal servant. He knew my devotion to the unhappy Marie Antoinette; he intrusted to me his secret of the dauphin's escape. Later, when I was released, Tallien and Barras confirmed the story of his flight, and informed me that he was secreted by the Prince de Condé. I have known it all, and I tell you I knew who Kleber's adjutant was; I inquired for him after he disappeared at the battle of Marengo, and when my agents told me that the young king died there, I wore mourning and prayed for him. And, now that I learn that the son of my beautiful queen is still alive, shall I suffer him to die like a traitor? No, never! Fouché, I tell you I will never suffer it; I will not have this unfortunate young man sacrificed! You must save him—I will have it so!"

"I!" cried Fouché, in amazement. "But you know that it is impossible, for you have heard my conversation with the consul. He himself said, 'The republic demands a royal victim. If it is not this so-called King Louis, let it be the Duke d'Enghien, for a victim must fall, in order to intimidate the royalists, and bring peace at last.'"

"But I will not have you bring human victims," cried Josephine; "the republic shall no longer be a cruel Moloch, as it was in the days of the guillotine. You shall, and you must, save the son of Queen Marie Antoinette. I desire to have peace in my conscience, that I may live without reproach, and be happier perhaps than now."

"But it is impossible," insisted Fouché. "You have heard yourself that if, before the sun goes down, Louis be not imprisoned, the sun of my good fortune will have set."

"And I told you, Fouché, that if you do this—if you become a regicide a second time—I will be your unappeasable enemy your whole life long; I will undertake to avenge on you the death of the queen and her son; I will follow your every step with my hate, and will not rest till I have overthrown you. And you know well that Bonaparte loves me, that I have influence with him, and that what I mean to do, I accomplish at last by prayers, tears, and frowns. So do not exasperate me, Fouché; do not make me your irreconcilable enemy. Save the son of the king whom you killed, conciliate the shades of his unhappy parents. Fouché, we are in the cabinet of the queen! Here she often tarried, here she often pressed her son to her heart, and asked God's blessing on him. Fouché, the spirit of Marie Antoinette is with us, and she will know it if you in pity spare the life of her son. Marie Antoinette will accuse you at the throne of God, and plead with God to show you no compassion, if you refuse to be merciful to her son. Fouché, in the name of the queen—on my knees—I implore you, save her son!"

And Josephine, her face bathed in tears, sank before him and raised her folded hands suppliantly to Fouché. The minister, deeply moved, pale with the recollections which Josephine awakened within him, stooped down to her, and bade her arise; and when she refused, and begged and threatened, and wept, his obstinacy was at last touched, or perhaps his prudence, which counselled him to make a friend, rather than an enemy, out of the all-powerful wife of the future emperor.

"Rise, madame," he said. "What mortal is able to resist your requests, since Bonaparte himself cannot? I will save your *protégé*, whatever shall come to me afterward from it."

She sprang up, and in the wildness of her joy threw her beautiful arms around Fouché's neck, and kissed him. "Fouché," she said, "I give you this kiss in the name of Queen Marie Antoinette. It is a kiss of forgiveness, and of blessing. You swear to me that you will save him?"

"I swear it, madame!"

"And I swear to you that as soon as he is saved, and Bonaparte's anger can no longer reach him, I will confess all to my husband, and put it in such a light that Bonaparte shall thank and reward you. Now tell me, how you will save him."

"I shall only be able if you will help me, madame."

"I am ready for any thing—that you know well. Tell me what I shall do."

"You must yourself direct a few lines to the young man, conjuring him in the name of his mother to fly, to save himself from the anger of the First Consul—to leave Europe."

"Oh! Fouché, how sly you are!" said Josephine, sadly. "You want my handwriting, in order to justify yourself to the First Consul in case of emergency. Very good. I will write the billet."

She hastened to her table, dashed a few words upon paper, and then passed the note to Fouché. "Read it," she said; "it contains all that is necessary, does it not?"

"Yes, madame; and you have written in such beautiful and moving words, that the young man will be melted, and will obey you. Will you now have the goodness to put the note in an envelope and to address it?"

She folded it, and put it into an envelope. "To whom shall I address it?" she then asked.

"Address it to King Louis XVII."

She did so with a quick stroke of the pen and handed the letter to Fouché. "Take it," she said, "it is your justification. And in order that you may be entirely secure," she continued, with a slight smile, "retain this letter yourself. What I would say to this young man I would rather communicate by word of mouth."

"How," cried Fouché, "you want—"

"To see and speak with the king," she said, sorrowfully, "to beg his forgiveness for myself and Bonaparte. Hush! do not oppose me, I am resolved upon it. I want to see the young man."

"But he cannot come here, madame—here, into the very den of the lion."

"No, not here, into the desecrated palace of the kings," she answered, bitterly. "No, he cannot come here—I shall go to him."

"You are jesting, madame, it is impossible. You, the wife of the First Consul, you will—"

"I want to fulfil a duty of gratitude and of loyalty, Fouché. In my heart I still feel myself the subject of the queen. Let me follow the call of my heart! Listen! My carriage stands ready. I was intending to drive to my friend Madame Tallien. I will take a pleasure-drive instead. In the Bois de Boulogne I will cause the carriage to stop, send it away, and return on foot. You will await in there with a fiacre and take me to the king."

"It shall be so," said Fouché. "Your will shall be my law. I only ask that you hasten, for you know well that I have much to do to-day. I shall take advantage of the time to procure for the young man the necessary passports for travel. But, madame, you must help him leave the city. For you know that the gates are all closed."

"I will tell Bonaparte that I am troubled to be in the city, now that it is so shut in. I will drive out to St. Cloud. His carriage can follow mine, and if the gatekeeper puts hinderances in the way, I will command him to let Louis pass. Now let us hasten!"

An hour later Josephine, after dismissing her equipage with the servants, entered the fiacre which was waiting for her near the fountain. Fouché received her there, and was unwearied in his complaints of the poor carriage which the wife of the First Consul must use.

Josephine smiled, "My dear sir," she said, "there have been times when I should have been very proud and very happy to have had such a fiacre as this, and not to have been compelled to walk through the muddy streets of Paris. Let it be as it is! The present days of superfluity have not made me proud, and I have a vivid recollection of the past. But tell me, Fouché, whither are we driving, and where does the young king live?"

"We are driving, if you graciously approve of it, to my house, and I have brought the young man there, for in his own house he is no longer safe. I have had it surrounded by agents of the secret police, with orders to arrest him on his return. He will, of course, not return, and it will be easier to assume the appearance that he received an intimation of his peril and escaped in season. But here we are before my door, and if you will draw the thick veil which happily you have fastened to your bonnet, carefully before your face, I hope that no one will see that the most beautiful lady in Paris honors my house with her distinguished presence."

Josephine made no reply to this flattery, but drew the black lace veil closely over her face, and hastened to leave the fiacre, and entered the house.

"Fouché," she whispered, as she ascended the staircase, "my heart beats as violently as it did when I drove to the Tuileries to be presented to Marie Antoinette. It was the first time that I spoke with the Queen of France."

"And now, madame," said Fouché, with a smile, "you will speak with the last King of France."

"Does he know who I am?"

"No, madame; I have left it to you to inform him. Here we are at the saloon—he is within!"

"Wait only a moment, Fouché. I must collect myself. My heart beats dreadfully. Now, now you may open the door!"

They entered the little saloon. Josephine stood still near the door, and while she hastily removed her bonnet and the thick veil and handed them to Fouché, her large, brilliant, brown eyes were turned to the young man who stood in the window-niche, his hands calmly folded over his breast. In this attitude, with the calm look of his face, the gentle glance of his blue eyes, he bore so close a resemblance to the pictures which represented Louis XVI. in his youth, that Josephine could not repress a cry of surprise, and hastened forward to the young man, who now advanced out of the window recess. "Madame," he said, bowing low before this beautiful and dignified lady whom he did not know, but whose sympathizing face made his heart tremble—"madame, doubtless you are the lady whom M. Fouché said I might expect to meet here."

"Yes, I am she," replied Josephine, with a voice trembling with emotion, her eyes, flooded with tears, all the while being fixed on the grave, youthful face which brought back so many memories of the past. "I have come to see you and to bring you the greetings of a man whom you loved, who revered you, and who died blessing you."

"Of whom do you speak?" asked Louis, turning pale.

"Men called him Toulan," whispered Josephine. "Queen Marie Antoinette termed him Fidèle."

"Fidèle!" cried Louis, in a tone of anguish. "Fidèle is dead!—my deliverer, he whose fidelity and bravery released me from my dreadful prison. Oh, madame, what sad thoughts do you bring back with his name!"

Josephine turned with a triumphant look to Fouché, who was still standing behind her in the neighborhood of the door. Her look said, "You see he is no traitor, he has stood the proof."

Fouché understood the language of this look perfectly, and a smile played over his features. Then Josephine turned again to the young man.

"You did not know that Toulan was dead?" she asked, softly.

"How could I know it?" he cried, bitterly. "I was taken at that time to a solitary castle, where I remained several years, and then I went to Germany, and from that time I have always lived in foreign parts. Since I have been in Paris I have made the effort to learn something about him, but no one could inform me, and so I solaced myself with the hope that he had really gone to America, for that was his object, as the other gentleman who assisted me in my release informed me at that time."

"This other gentleman," said Josephine, softly, "was the Baron de Jarjayes, and the child who was carried into the Temple was the—"

"The son of the Count de Frotté," rejoined Louis.

"Fouché, it is he!" cried Josephine. "It is the son of my noble, unfortunate Queen Marie Antoinette.—Oh, sire, let me testify my homage to you, as becomes a subject when she stands before her king. Sire, I bow my knee before you, and I would gladly pour out my whole life in tears, and with each of these tears beg your forgiveness for France, for us all."

And the beautiful, passionate creole sank upon her knee, and raised her tearful eyes to the young man who, perplexed and blushing, gazed at her, then hastily stooped to her and conjured her to rise.

"Not, sire," she cried, "until you tell me that you have forgiven me—that you have forgiven us all."

"I forgive you? What have I to forgive in you? Monsieur Fouché, who is this lady who knows me and my destinies, and who brings me greetings from Fidèle? What have I to forgive in her? Who is she? Tell me her name?"

"Monsieur," said Fouché, slowly approaching, "this lady is—"

"Hush! Fouché, I will tell him myself," interrupted Josephine. "Sire, when your beautiful, exalted mother was still living in Versailles, I had the honor to be presented to her, both at the grand receptions and at the minor ones. One day—it was already in the unhappy Reign of Terror—when the queen had left Versailles and Trianon, and was already living in the Tuileries, I went thither to pay my respects."

"That is to say, madame," cried Louis, "you were a brave and loyal woman, for only the brave and the loyal ventured then to go to the Tuileries. Oh, speak on! speak on! You wanted to pay your respects to the queen, you were saying; she received you, did she not? You were taken into the little saffron saloon?"

"No, sire, the queen was not there, she was in the little music-hall; and, because at that time etiquette was no longer rigidly enforced, I was allowed to accompany the Marchioness de Tourzel into the music-room. The queen did not notice our entrance, for she was singing. I remained standing at the door, and contemplated the wondrous picture that I saw there. The queen, in a simple white dress, her light brown, slightly powdered hair concealed by a black lace head-dress, sat at the spinet on which her white hands rested. Near her in the window-niche sat madame, engaged with her embroidery. Very near her sat, in a little arm-chair, a boy of five years, a lovely child, with long golden locks, with large blue eyes, and looking like an angel. The little hands, surrounded by lace wristbands, leaned on the support of the chair, while his looks rested incessantly upon the countenance of the queen, and his whole child's soul was absorbed in the gaze which he directed to his mother. The queen was singing, and the tones of her soulful voice resound still in my heart. The song was this:

'Dors, mon enfant, clos ta paupière,
Tes cris me déchirent le cœur;
Dors, mon enfant, ta pauvre mère
A bien assez de sa douleur.'

And while she sang she turned her head toward her son, who listened to her motionless and as if enchanted. 'See,' cried madame, the sister of the pretty boy, 'I believe Louis Charles has fallen asleep.' The child started up, and a glowing redness suffused his cheeks. 'Oh! Theresa,' he cried, 'how could any one go to sleep when my mamma queen was singing?' His mother stooped down to him, pressed a long kiss upon his brow, and a tear fell from her eyes upon his golden hair. I saw it, and involuntarily my eyes filled; I could not hold back my tears, and went softly out to compose myself. Sire, I see you still before me—this beautiful queen and her children—and it is with me to-day as then, I must weep."

"And I!—oh, my God!—and I!" whispered Louis, putting both his hands before his quivering face. Even Fouché seemed moved, his lips trembled and his cheeks grew pale.

A long pause ensued. Nothing was heard but the convulsive sobbing of the young man, who still held his hands before his face, and wept so violently that the tears poured down in heavy drops between his fingers.

"Sire," cried Josephine, with supplicatory voice—"sire, by the recollection of that hour, I conjure you, forgive me that I now live in those rooms which Marie Antoinette once inhabited. Ah! it has not been my wish, and I have done it only with pain and grief. Believe me, sire, and forgive me that I have been compelled to live in the palace of the kings."

He took his hands from his face, and gazed at her. "You live in the Tuileries? Who are you? Madame, who are you?"

"Sire, I was formerly Viscountess Beauharnais; now I am—"

"The wife of the First Consul!" exclaimed the prince, drawing back in terror—"the wife of him who is pursuing me, and who, as Fouché says, means to bring me to the scaffold."

"Oh, sire, forgive him!" implored Josephine; 'he is not wicked, he is not cruel; but circumstances compel him to act as he does. God Himself, it would seem, has chosen him to restore, with his heroic sword and his heroic spirit, peace and prosperity to this unfortunate land, bleeding from a thousand wounds. He was the savior of France, and the grateful nation hailed him with pæans, and full of confidence laid the reins of government in his hands. Through his victories and his administration of affairs, France has again grown strong and great and happy; and yet he is daily threatened by assassins, yet there are continual conspiracies whose aim is to murder the man to whom France is indebted for its new birth. What wonder that he at last, to put an end to these conspiracies, and these attempts upon his life, will, by a deed of horror, inspire the conspirators with fear? He is firmly resolved on this. The lion has been aroused from his calmness by new conspiracies, and the shaking of his mane will this time annihilate all who venture to conspire against him. Sire, I do not accuse you; I do not say that you do wrongly to make every attempt to regain the inheritance of your fathers. May God judge between you and your enemies! But your enemies have the power in their hands, and you must yield to that power. Oh, my dear, unfortunate, pitiable lord, I conjure you, save yourself from the anger of the First Consul, and from the pursuers who have been sent out to seek you. If you are found, you are lost, and no one in the world will then be able to save you. Fly, therefore—fly, while there is still time!"

"Fly!" cried the young prince, bitterly, "evermore fly! My whole life is a perpetual flight, a continuous concealment. Like the Wandering Jew, I must journey from land to land—nowhere can I rest, nowhere find peace. Without a home, without parents, without a name, I wander around, and, like a hunted wild beast, I must continually start afresh, for the hounds are close behind me. Well, be it so, then; I am weary of defying my fate longer; I surrender myself to what is inevitable. The First Consul may send me as a conspirator to the scaffold. I am prepared to die. I shall find that peace in death at least that life so cruelly denies me. I will not fly—I will remain. The example of my parents will teach me how to die."

"Oh, speak not so!" exclaimed Josephine. "Have pity on me, have pity on yourself. You are still so young, life has so much for you yet, there remains so much to you yet to hope for. You must live, not to avenge the death of your illustrious parents, but to make its memory less poignant. Son of kings, you have received life from God, and from your parents, you may not lightly throw it away, but must defend it, for the blessing of your mother rests upon your head, which you must save from the scaffold."

"You must live," said Fouché, "for your death would bring joy to those who were the bitter enemies of Queen Marie Antoinette, and who would be your mocking heirs. Will you grant to the Count de Lille the uncontested right of calling himself Louis XVIII.?—the Count de Lille, who caused Marie Antoinette to shed so many tears."

The prince flamed up at this, and his eyes flashed.

"No," he cried, "the Count de Lille shall not have this joy. He shall not rest his curse-laden head upon the pillow with the calm consciousness that he will be the king of the future. My vision shall disturb his sleep, and the possibility that I shall return and demand my own again, shall be the terror that shall keep peace far from him. You are right, madame, I must live. The spirit of Marie Antoinette hovers over me, and demands that I live, and by my life avenge her of her most bitter enemy. Let it be so, then. Tell me, Fouché, whither shall I go? Where shall the poor criminal hide himself, whose only offence lies in this, that he is alive, and that he is the son of his father? Where is there a cave in which the poor hunted game can hide himself from the hounds?"

"Sire, you must away, away into foreign lands. The arm of the First Consul is powerful, and his eagle eye scans all Europe, and would discover you at any point."

"You must for the present find a home beyond the sea," said Fouché, approaching nearer. "I have already taken measures which will allow you to do so. There are ships sailing southward from Marseilles every day, and in one of these you must go to America. America is the land of freedom, of adventures, and of great deeds. You will there find sufficient occupation for your spirit and for your love of work."

"It is true," said Louis, with a bitter smile; "I will go to America. I will find a refuge with the savages. Perhaps they will appoint me as their chieftain, and adorn my head with a crown of feathers instead of the crown of gold. Yes, I will go to America. In the primeval forests, with the children of nature, there will be a home for the exile, the homeless one. Madame, I thank you for your sympathy and your goodness, and my thanks shall consist in this, that I subject myself wholly to your will. You loved Queen Marie Antoinette. A blessing on you, and all who love you."

He extended both his hands to Josephine, and, as she was about to press them to her lips, he stooped toward her with a sad smile.

"Madame, bless my poor brow with the touch of those lips which once kissed the hand of my mother."

Josephine did as she was asked, and a tear fell from her eyes upon his fair hair.

"Go, sire," she said, "and may God bless and protect you! If you ever need my help, call upon me, and be sure that I will never neglect your voice."

An hour later the wife of the First Consul drove out to St. Cloud. At the corner of the Rue St. Honore a second carriage joined her own, and a young man who sat in it greeted Josephine deferentially as she leaned far out of the carriage to return his salute.

At the barriers the carriage stopped, for the gates of the city were still closed. But Josephine beckoned the officer of the guard to her carriage, and, fortunately, he knew the wife of the First Consul.

"It is not necessary," said Josephine, with a charming smile, "it is not necessary that I should procure a permit from the First Consul to allow myself and my escort to pass the gate? You do not suppose that I and my secretary, who sits in the next carriage, belong to the villains who threaten the life of my husband?"

The officer, enchanted with the grace of Josephine, bowed low, and commanded the guard instantly to open the gate and allow the two carriages to pass.

And so the son of the queen was saved. For the second time he left Paris, to go forth as an exile and an adventurer to meet his fate.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AFTER LONG WANDERINGS.

For the city of Paris the 16th of February, 1804, was a day of terror. The gates remained closed the whole day, military patrols passed through the streets, at whose corners the proclamations were posted, by which Murat, the governor of Paris, announced to the city that fifty assassins were within the walls, intent on taking the life of the First Consul.

The condemned surgeon, Querolle, had, meantime, made his confession, and named the heads of the conspiracy and their accomplices, and, only after all the persons mentioned by him were arrested, were the gates of the city opened.

A great trial then commenced of the men who had been sent by the Bourbons for this nefarious purpose. Among the accused were General Pichegru, the abettor of Georges, and General Moreau, the most prominent of all.

The history of this trial was enveloped in obscurity, and it was faintly whispered that Pichegru had taken his own life in prison, and more faintly yet was it rumored that he was secretly dispatched in prison. And then, on one of these days, there were to be seen through all Paris only pale, sad faces, and a murmur of horror ran through all the streets and all the houses.

The story was current that the Duke d'Enghien, the grandson of the Prince de Condé, had been arrested by French soldiers at Baden, beyond the frontier, and had been brought to Vincennes; that he was accused there that same night of being an accomplice in a plot to take the life of the First Consul, and to disturb the peace of the republic; that he was quickly condemned by a court-martial, and shot before morning within the fortress of Vincennes.

The report was only too true. Bonaparte had kept his word; he had sacrificed a royal victim to the threatened cause of the republic; he would, by one deed of horror, fill the conspirators with fear, and cause them to abandon their bloody plans.

The means employed were cruel, but the end was reached which Bonaparte hoped to attain, and thenceforth there were no more conspiracies against the life of the First Consul, who, on the 18th of May, that same year, declared himself emperor.

A few days after this, the public trial of the accused began, which Fouché attended as the reinstalled minister of police, and over which Regnier presided in his new capacity of chief judge.

Seventeen of those indicted were condemned to death, others to years of imprisonment, and among these was General Moreau. But the popular voice declared itself so loudly and energetically for the brave general of the republic, that it was considered expedient to heed it. Moreau was released from prison, and went to the Spanish frontier, whence he sailed to North America.

On the 25th of June, twelve of the conspirators, Georges at their head, were executed; the other five, who had been condemned to death, had their sentence commuted to banishment.

The gentle, kind-hearted Josephine viewed all these things with sadness, for her power over the heart of her husband was waning, and the sun of her glory had set. Her prayers and tears had no longer a prevailing influence over Bonaparte, and she had not been able to avert the death of the Duke d'Enghien.

"I have tried all means," she said, with tears, to Bourrienne, the chief secretary of the emperor; "I wanted at any cost to turn him aside from his dreadful intention. He had not apprised me of it, but you know in what way I learned it. At my request he confessed to me his purpose, but he was steeled against my prayers. I clung to him, I fell on my knees before him. 'Do not meddle with what is none of your business!' he cried, angrily, as he pushed me away from him. 'These are not women's affairs—leave me in peace.' And so I had to let the worst come, and could do nothing to hinder it. But afterward, when all was over, Bonaparte was deeply affected, and for several days he remained sad and silent, and scolded me no more when he found me in tears." *

The days passed by, the days of splendor, and then fol-

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* Bourrienne, "Mémoires du Consulat et de l'Empire."

lowed for Josephine the days of misery and grief. Repelled by Napoleon, she mourned four years over her spurned love and her ruined fortunes; but then, when Napoleon's star went down, when he was robbed of his imperial crown and compelled to leave France, Josephine's heart broke, and she hid herself in her grave, in order not to witness Napoleon's humiliation.

And thus the empire was abolished, and the Count de Lille called back by foreign potentates, and not by the French nation, in order, as Louis XVIII., to reërect the throne of the Lilies.

And where, all this time, was the son of Queen Marie Antoinette? Where was Louis XVII.?

He had kept his word which he gave to Josephine. He had gone to the primeval forests and to the savages, and they had given him a crown of feathers and made him their king.* For years he lived among them, honored as their king, loved as their hero. Then a longing for his country seized him, and going to Brazil in the service of his people, he made use of the opportunity to enter into a contract with Don Juan, and not return to his copper-colored tribe. The precious treasure which he possessed, his papers, he had been able to preserve during all the journeys and amid all the perils of his life, and these papers procured him a hospitable and honorable reception with Don Juan. From him the king without name or inheritance learned the changes that had meanwhile taken place in France, and, at the first opportunity which offered, he returned to Europe, arriving at Paris in the middle of the year 1816.

The Prince de Condé, now the Duke de Bourbon, received the wanderer with tenderness, but with deep regret, for now it was too late, and his hope for a restoration of the returning prince could rest on no basis. The Count de Provence was now King Louis XVIII., and never would he descend from his throne to give back to the son of Marie Antoinette that crown which he wore with so much satisfaction and pride.

Much more simple and easy was it to treat the pretender as a lunatic or as an adventurer, and to set his claims aside forever. Useless were all the letters which the Baron de

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* "Mémoires du Duc de Normandie," pp. 89–162.

Richemont, the name that Louis still bore, addressed to his uncle the king, to his sister the Duchess de Angoulême, imploring them for an interview. No answer was received. No audience was granted to this adventurer, whose claims could not be recognized without dethroning Louis XVIII., and destroying the prospects of the crown for the duchess's son, the Duke de Berri. Louis XVII. had died and he could not return to the living. He saw it, he knew it, and a deep sorrow took possession of him. But he rose above it—he would not die; he would live, a terror and an avenger to his cruel relatives.

But it was a restless life that the son of the queen must lead, in order to protect himself from the daggers of his powerful enemies. The Prince de Condé conjured him to secure himself against the attacks which were made more than once upon the Baron de Richemont, and Louis gave heed to his requests and tears. He travelled abroad; but after returning in two years from a journey in Asia and Africa, on landing on the Italian coast, he was arrested in 1818, at the instigation of the Austrian ambassador at Mantua, and confined in the prison of Milan.

Seven years the unhappy prince spent in the Austrian prison, without once being summoned before a judge—seven years of solitude, of darkness, and of want. But the son of Marie Antoinette had learned in his youth to bear these things, and his prison-life in Milan was not so cruel as that in the Temple under Simon. Here there were at least sympathizing souls who pitied him; even the turnkeys of the prison were courteous and kind when they entered the cell of the "King of France;" and one day, beyond the wall of his apartment, was heard a voice singing, in gentle, melodious tones, a *romanza* which Louis had composed, and written on the wall when he occupied the neighboring cell.

This voice, which sounded like a greeting from the world, was that of Silvio Pellico. The celebrated author of "Le Mie Prigioni," relates in touching words this salutation of his neighbor:

"My bed was carried," he said, "into the new cell that was prepared for me, and as soon as the inspectors had left me alone, my first care was to examine the walls. There were to be seen there some words, recollections of the past, written with chalk, with pencil, or with a sharp tool. I found there also two pretty French lines, which I am sorry I did not copy. I began to sing them to my melody of 'The Poor Magdalen,' when a voice near me responded with another air. When the singer ended, I called out, 'Bravo!' He replied with a polite salutation, and asked me if I was French.

"'No, I am Italian, and am called Silvio Pellico.'

"'The author of *Francesca da Rimini?*'

"'Yes, the same.'

"And now there followed a courtly compliment, with the usual regrets for my imprisonment. He asked in what part of Italy I was born, and when I told him in Saluzzo, in Piedmont, he awarded the Piedmontese some words of high praise, and spoke particularly of Bodoni (a celebrated printer, director of the national printing establishment at Parma). His compliments were brief and discriminating, and disclosed a finely cultivated mind.

"'And now, sir,' said I, 'allow me to ask you who you are.'

"'You were just singing a song that I wrote '

"'These pretty verses here upon the wall, are they yours?'

"'Yes, they are.'

"'You are therefore—'

"'The Duke de Normandie.'

"The watchman was just then walking past my window and so I was still. After some time we resumed our conversation. When I asked whether he was Louis XVII., he responded in the affirmative, and began to declaim hotly against Louis XVIII. his uncle, the usurper of his rights.

"I implored him to give me his history in brief outlines. He did so, and related to me all the details connected with the life of Louis XVII., which I knew only in part. He told me how he had been imprisoned with Simon the cobbler, been compelled to sign a calumniating charge against his mother, etc. He then related to me the story of his escape and his flight to America, of his return to reclaim the throne of his fathers, and his arrest in Mantua.

"He portrayed his history with extraordinary life. All the incidents of the French Revolution were present before him; he spoke with natural eloquence, and wove in piquant anecdotes very *apropos.* His manner of expression smacked once in a while of the soldier, but there was no lack of the elegance that disclosed his intercourse with good society.

"'Will you allow me,' I asked him, 'to treat you as a friend and leave off all titles?'

"'I want exactly that,' he answered. 'Misfortune has taught me the good lesson to despise all the vanities of earth. Believe me, my pride does not lie in this, that I am a king, but that I am a man.'

"After this we had long conversations mornings and evenings, and I recognized in him a noble, beautiful soul, sensitive to all that is good. He knew how to win hearts, and even the turnkeys were kind to him. One of them said to me on coming from the cell of my neighbor: 'I have strong hopes that he will make me chief porter when he is king; I have had the boldness to ask him for the position, and he has promised it.'

"To the veneration of the turnkeys for the *king of the future* I owe it that one day when I was led to trial, and had to pass by his cell, they opened the doors that I might see my illustrious friend. He was of medium size, from forty to forty-five years of age, somewhat *embonpoint*, and had a thoroughly Bourbon physiognomy." *

After seven years of imprisonment, the gates opened at last for the Baron de Richemont; and he who had been placed there without the sentence of a judge, was released with as little show of authority. The son of the queen was free again; the death of King Louis XVIII. had restored him to the walks of men. But another King of France assumed his place at once; the Count d'Artois ascended the throne under the title of Charles X.

The poor Baron de Richemont bore his sorrows and his humiliation into the valleys of Switzerland. But when, in the year 1830, King Charles X. abdicated the throne, the son of Marie Antoinette again came forth from his solitude, issued a proclamation to the French people, and, in the presence of all Europe, demanded his inheritance.

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* Silvio Pellico, "Le Mie Prigioni," p. 51 et seq. An examination of Silvio Pellico's work will convince the reader that Silvio Pellico was by no means a believer in the genuineness of his companion's claims. Miss Mühlbach seems to have been scarcely just in leaving the impression conveyed in the text.—TR.

Yet, amid the clash of weapons and the roar of revolutions, the voice of the unfortunate prince was overborne. He had no soldiers, no cannon, to enforce silence and make himself be heard. But the Duke d'Orleans, Louis Philippe, had soldiers and cannon; and the arms of his dependants, and the magic of his wealth, placed him upon the throne in July, 1830.*

The poor Baron de Richemont, the son of kings, the last of the Bourbons in France, had now a single friend, who, perhaps, would receive him. This friend was the Duke de Bourbon-Condé, now an old man of eighty years. One day, some weeks after the accession of Louis Philippe, the Duke de Bourbon received at his palace of St. Leu a gentleman whom nobody knew, who announced himself as the Baron de Richemont.

The duke went out into the anteroom, greeted his guest with the greatest deference, and led him into his cabinet. There the two gentlemen carried on a long and earnest conversation, and the secretary of the duke, who was at work in the library hard by, distinctly heard his master say, with trembling tones: "Sire, I implore you, forgive me. The circumstances were stronger than my will. Sire, go not into judgment with me—forgive me."

To this an angry voice replied: "No, I will not forgive you, for you have dealt perfidiously with the son, as you did once with the mother! You have not redeemed the oath that you once gave me. I leave you. May God be gracious to you, and pardon you. Take care that He does not punish you for the treachery that you have shown to me. You swore that you would acknowledge no other king but me, and yet you have taken your oath to the third king. Farewell! May the Almighty protect you! We shall see each other, perhaps, in a better world, and there you will have to give your account to a Judge whom nothing can mitigate. Be happy, and may the dead sleep in peace!" †

The secretary then heard the forcible closing of a door, and all became still. After an hour he entered the duke's cabinet, because the silence troubled him. The old duke sat in his arm-chair, pale, and gazing with constant looks at the door through which the stranger had departed. He was reticent the whole day, and in the night following his valet heard him softly praying and weeping. On the next morning, August 27th, 1830, on entering the sleeping-room of his master, he found him dead and already rigid. The duke had hanged himself at the window of his own room.

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* It was the 9th of August.—Tr.

† The very words of Richemont.—See "Mémoires du Duc de Normandie" p. 243.

The last dependant of the unhappy king, who still bore the name of the pretender, was dead, as were all his relations, including his sister, the Duchess d'Angoulême. But from the dead there came a greeting. She had ordered a large sum to be paid yearly to the Baron de Richemont, and the report was that she had wished to recognize him on her death-bed as her brother. But her confessor had counselled her that such a recognition would introduce new contentions among the Bourbons, and give the pretender Henry V. equal claims with Louis XVII.

Yet the Duke de Normandie was not silent; he spoke so loudly of his rights that Louis Philippe at last held it advisable to arrest him and bring him to trial. The preliminary investigation continued fifteen months; then he was brought before the court, and accused of conspiracy against the safety of the state.

The *Gazette des Tribunaux* of the 3d, 4th, and 5th of November, 1834, gave the details of this trial. Spectators poured in from all sides, and also, in an unexpected manner, witnesses who declared themselves ready to prove the identity of the Baron de Richemont with the Duke de Normandie, son of Louis XVI. The accused appeared entirely calm and dignified before the bar, and when the counsel for the government accused him of appropriating a name that did not belong to him, he asked quietly, "Gentlemen, if I am not Louis XVII., will you tell me who I am?"

No one knew how to reply to this question; but many eminent legitimists had come to solemnly declare that the accused was in truth their king, and that he was the rescued orphan of the Temple.

Even the president of the court seemed to be convinced of this, and his closing words in addressing the jury were these: "Gentlemen, who is the accused who stands before you to-day? What is his name, his lineage, his family? What are his antecedents, his whole history? Is he an instrument of the enemies of France, or is he, much more, an unfortunate who has miraculously escaped the horrors of a bloody revolution, and, laid under bans by his birth, has now no name and no refuge for his head?"

The jury, however, were not called upon to answer this question; they had simply to reply to the question whether the accused was guilty of a conspiracy against the state. This they answered with a "Guilty," and condemned the accused to an imprisonment of twelve years.

The Duke de Normandie, or King Louis Charles, as we may choose to call him, was taken to St. Pélagie; but during the next year, through the assistance of powerful friends, which his trial had gained over to him, he was released from prison, and again spent some quiet years in Switzerland.

Then came the year 1848, the year of revolutions, whose storm-waves drove Louis Philippe to England, never to ascend again the throne of France.

Again Louis Charles issued from his solitude, and this time not alone. A swarm of rich and powerful legitimists thronged around him, a journal—*L'Inflexible*—was secured to the interests of the Duke de Normandie, and La Vendée, with a thousand loyal voices, summoned King Louis XVII. to herself. There, as he was on the point of hastening to his faithful ones, God laid his hand upon him and held him back; a stroke of paralysis crippled his limbs. After recovering from this attack, the strength of his mind was taken away, and the decided, fiery, indefatigable pretender became a gentle, pious monk, who fasted and prayed, and wandered to Rome to have an interview with Pope Pius IX., and received absolution from him for all his sins.

The pope met the Duke de Normandie at Gaeta on the 20th of February, 1849, and had a long and secret conversation with him; and, when Louis Charles withdrew, it was as a quiet, pious, smiling man, who never denied his high extraction, but who had no longer a wish to be restored to the inheritance of his fathers. More and more he withdrew from the world, and lived only in the circle of a few noble-born legitimists, who never addressed him excepting as "sire." He accepted the title as one that was his due, and never refused it even when approached by many adherents of the new Napoleonic dynasty. At that time he wrote to his friends:

"You ask me what I wish, what the end of my struggle is, which has now lasted more than a half century? I will tell you. You do not suppose, I trust, that I am still determined to ascend the throne of France: to do this would be a great misfortune for me, but it would certainly be a greater one for France, and it would rightly be said of both of us that we merit our misfortune; still less do I hope to attain to wealth and high station by being recognized. You know that I need very little for my support, and that this little is amply provided for. What else should I strive for? To avenge myself? My friend, I am at an age when the blood flows slower through the veins, and when one finds an inexpressible charm in forgiving. What, then, do I wish? What could I have? Why do I incessantly strive? This is the reason, my friend: I should like, before my death, to convince all who have disinterestedly believed in me, that it is not a political adventurer, but the royal 'orphan of the Temple,' who owes them his friendship, and gives them his gratitude."

And this last goal of his life was within his reach. The friends and legitimists who surrounded him believed in him, and when he died his dependants and servants mourned for him as for a departed king. They bore him with solemn pomp to his grave, at the dead of night. Some fifty persons followed his coffin, and a priest went before it. He was buried in the churchyard of Villefranche, and his tombstone bears the following inscription:

HERE RESTS
LOUIS CHARLES, OF FRANCE,
Born at Versailles, March 27, 1785.
Died in the Château of Vaux-Renaud, August 10, 1858.

THE END.

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